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THE

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THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.

MINISTER OF THE TRON CHURCH,

GLASGOW.

VOL. III.

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PREFACE

TO DISCOURSES ON THE APPLICATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE COMMERCIAL AND ORDINARY AFFAIRS OF LIFE.

THIS volume can be regarded in no other light, than as the fragment of a subject far too extensive to be overtaken within a compass so narrow. There has only a partial survey been taken of the morality of the actions that are current among people engaged in merchandise: and with regard to the morality of the affections which stir in their hearts, and give a feverish and diseased activity to the pursuits of worldly ambition, this has scarcely been touched upon, save in a very general way in the concluding Discourse.

And yet, in the estimation of every cultivated Christian, this second branch of the subject should be by far the most interesting,—as it relates to that spiritual discipline by which the love of the world is overcome; and by which all that oppressive anxiety is kept in check, which the reverses and uncertainties of business are so apt to inject into the bosom; and by which the appetite that urges him who hasteth to

be rich is effectually restrained—so as to make it possible for a man to give his hand duties of his secular occupation, and, at the same time, to maintain that sacredness of heart which becomes every fleeting traveller through a scene, all whose pleasures and whose prospects are so soon to pass away.

Should this part of the subject be resumed at some future opportunity, there are two questions of casuistry connected with it, which will demand no small degree of consideration. The first relates to the degree in which an affection for present things, and present interests ought to be indulged. And the second is, whether, on the supposition that a desire after the good things of the present life were reduced down to the standard of the gospel, there would remain a sufficient impulse in the world for upholding its commerce, at the rate which would secure the greatest amount of comfort and subsistence to its families.

Without offering any demonstration, at present, upon this matter, we simply state it as our opinion, that, though the whole business of the world were in the hands of men thoroughly Christianised, and who, rating wealth according to its real dimensions on the high scale of eternity, were chastened out of all their idolatrous regards to it—yet would trade, in these circumstances, be carried to the extreme limit of its

being really productive or desirable. An affection for riches, beyond what Christianity prescribes, is not essential to any extension of commerce that is at all valuable or legitimate; and in opposition to the maxim, that the spirit of enterprise is the soul of commercial prosperity, do we hold, that it is the excess of this spirit beyond the moderation of the New Testament, which, pressing on the natural boundaries of trade, is sure, at length, to visit every country, where it operates with the recoil of all those calamities, which, in the shape of beggared capitalists, and unemployed operatives, and dreary intervals of bankruptcy and alarm, are observed to follow a season of overdone speculation.

CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES WHICH MAY EXIST WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

PHILIPPIANS iv, 8.—Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, - - - - 13

DISCOURSE II.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AIDING AND AUGMENTING THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES.

ROMANS xiv, 18.—For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men, - - - - - - - 33

DISCOURSE III.

THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS IN PROMOTING THE HONESTIES OF MERCANTILE INTERCOURSE.

LUKE vi, 33.—And if you do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same, - - 54

DISCOURSE VIII.

ON THE LOVE OF MONEY.

JOB xxxi, 24—28.—If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 180

OCCASIONAL SERMONS.

SERMON I.

A SERMON BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF THE DESTITUTE SICK.

PSALM xli, 1.—Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble, - - - - - - - - - 203

SERMON II.

THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL PEACE.

ISAIAH xi, 4.—Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, - - - - - - - - 235

SERMON III.

THE DUTY OF GIVING AN IMMEDIATE DILIGENCE TO THE BUSINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

An Address to the inhabitants of the Parish of Kilmany, - - - 265

make him an odious and a revolting spectacle? In a word, might not Sensibility shed forth its tears, and Friendship perform its services, and Liberality impart of its treasure, and Patriotism earn the gratitude of its country, and Honour maintain itself entire and untainted, and all the softenings of what is amiable, and all the glories of what is chivalrous and manly, gather into one bright effulgency of moral accomplishment on the person of him who never, for a single day of his life, subordinates one habit, or one affection, to the will of the Almighty; who is just as careless and as unconcerned about God, as if the native tendencies of his constitution had compounded him into a monster of deformity; and who just as effectually realizes this attribute of rebellion against his maker, as the most loathsome and profligate of the species, that he walks in the counsel of his own heart, and after the sight of his own eyes?

The same constitutional variety may be seen on the lower fields of creation. You there witness the gentleness of one animal, the affectionate fidelity of another, the cruel and unrelenting ferocity of a third; and you never question the propriety of the language, when some of these instinctive tendencies are better reported of than others; or when it is said of the former of them, that they are the more fine, and amiable, and endearing. But it does not once occur to you, that, even in the very best of these exhibitions, there is any sense of God, or that the great master-principle of his authority is at all concerned in it. Transfer this contemplation back again to our species; and under the same complexional difference of the more and the less lovely, or the

more and the less hateful, you will perceive the same utter insensibility to the consideration of a God, or the same utter inefficiency on the part of his law to subdue human habits and human inclinations. It is true, that there is one distinction between the two cases; but it all goes to aggravate the guilt and the ingratitude of man. He has an understanding which the inferior animals have not—and yet, with this understanding does he refuse practically to acknowledge God. He has a conscience, which they have not—and yet, though it whisper in the ear of his inner man the claims of an unseen legislator, does he lull away his time in the slumbers of indifference, and live without him in the world.

Or go to the people of another planet, over whom the hold of allegiance to their maker is unbroken—in whose hearts the Supreme sits enthroned, and throughout the whole of whose history there runs the perpetual and the unfailing habit of subordination to his law. It is conceivable, that with them too, there may be varieties of temper and of natural inclination, and yet all of them be under the effective control of one great and imperious principle; that in subjection to the will of God, every kind and every honorable disposition is cherished to the uttermost; and that in subjection to the same will, every tendency to anger, and malignity, and revenge, is repressed at the first moment of its threatened operation; and that in this way, there will be the fostering of a constant encouragement given to the one set of instincts, and the struggling of a constant opposition made against the other. Now, only conceive this great bond of allegiance to be dissolved;

the mighty and subordinating principle, which went to wield an ascendency over every movement and every affection, to be loosened and done away; and then would this loyal, obedient world, become what ours is—independent of Christianity. Every constitutional desire would run out, in the unchecked spontaneity of its own movements. The law of heaven would furnish no counteraction to the impulses and the tendencies of nature. And tell us, in these circumstances, when the restraint of religion was thus lifted off, and all the passions let out to take their own tumultuous and independent career—tell us, if, though amid the uproar of the licentious and vindictive propensities, there did gleam forth at times some of the finer and the lovelier sympathies of nature—tell us, if this would at all affect the state of that world as a state of enmity against God; where his will was reduced to an element of utter insignificancy; where the voice of their rightful master fell powerless on the consciences of a listless and alienated family; where humour, and interest, and propensity—at one time selfish, and at another social—took their alternate sway over those hearts from which there was excluded all effectual sense of an over-ruling God? If he be unheeded and disowned by the creatures whom he has formed, can it be said to alleviate the deformity of their rebellion, that they, at times, experience the impulse of some amiable feeling which he hath implanted, or at times hold out some beauteousness of aspect which he hath shed over them? Shall the value of the multitude of the gifts release them from their loyalty to the giver; and when nature puts herself into the attitude of

indifference or hostility against him, how is it that the graces and the accomplishments of nature can be pled in mitigation of her antipathy to him, who invested nature with all her graces, and upholds her in the display of all her accomplishments?

The way, then, to assert the depravity of man, is to fasten on the radical element of depravity, and to show how deeply it lies incorporated with his moral constitution. It is not by an utterance of rash and sweeping totality to refuse him the possession of what is kind in sympathy, or of what is dignified in principle—for this were in the face of all observation. It is to charge him direct with his utter disloyalty to God. It is to convict him of treason against the majesty of heaven. It is to press home upon him the impiety of not caring about God. It is to tell him, that the hourly and habitual language of his heart is, I will not have the Being who made me to rule over me. It is to go to the man of honor, and, while we frankly award it to him that his pulse beats high in the pride of integrity—it is to tell him, that he who keeps it in living play, and who sustains the loftiness of its movements, and who, in one moment of time, could arrest it for ever, is not in all his thoughts. It is to go to the man of soft and gentle emotions, and, while we gaze in tenderness upon him—it is to read to him, out of his own character, how the exquisite mechanism of feeling may be in full operation, while he who framed it is forgotten; while he who poured into his constitution the milk of human kindness, may never be adverted to with one single sentiment of veneration, or one single purpose of obedience; while he who gave him his gentler

nature, who clothed him in all its adornments, and in virtue of whose appointment it is, that, instead of an odious and a revolting monster, he is the much loved child of sensibility, may be utterly disowned by him. In a word, it is to go round among all that Humanity has to offer in the shape of fair and amiable, and engaging, and to prove how deeply Humanity has revolted against that Being who has done so much to beautify and to exalt her. It is to prove that the carnal mind, under all its varied complexions of harshness, or of delicacy, is enmity against God. It is to prove that, let nature be as rich as she may in moral accomplishments, and let the most favored of her sons realize upon his own person the finest and the fullest assemblage of them—should he, at the moment of leaving this theatre of display, and bursting loose from the framework of mortality, stand in the presence of his judge, and have the question put to him, What hast thou done unto me? this man of constitutional virtue, with all the salutations he got upon earth, and all the reverence that he has left behind him, may, naked and defenceless, before him who sitteth on the throne, be left without a plea and without an argument.

God's controversy with our species, is not, that the glow of honor or of humanity is never felt among them. It is, that none of them understandeth, and none of them seeketh after God. It is, that he is deposed from his rightful ascendency. It is that he, who in fact inserted in the human bosom every one principle that can embellish the individual possessor, or maintain the order of society, is banished altogether from the circle of his habitual contemplations.

It is, that man taketh his way in life as much at random, as if there was no presiding Divinity at all; and that, whether he at one time grovel in the depths of sensuality, or at another kindle with some generous movement of sympathy or of patriotism, he is at both times alike unmindful of him to whom he owes his continuance and his birth. It is, that he moves his every footstep at his own will; and has utterly discarded, from its supremacy over him, the will of that invisible Master who compasses all his goings, and never ceases to pursue him by the claims of a resistless and legitimate authority. It is this which is the essential or the constituting principle of rebellion against God. This it is which has exiled the planet we live in beyond the limits of his favored creation—and whether it be shrouded in the turpitude of licentiousness or cruelty, or occasionally brightened with the gleam of the kindly and the honorable virtues, it is thus that it is seen as afar off, by Him who sitteth on the throne, and looketh on our strayed world, as athwart a wide and a dreary gulf of separation.

And when prompted by love towards his alienated children, he devised a way of recalling them—when willing to pass over all the ingratitude he had gotten from their hands, he reared a pathway of return, and proclaimed a pardon and a welcome to all who should walk upon it—when through the offered Mediator, who magnified his broken law, and upheld, by his mysterious sacrifice, the dignity of that government which the children of Adam had disowned, he invited all to come to him and be saved—should this message be brought to the door of the

most honourable man upon earth, and he turn in contempt and hostility away from it, has not that man posted himself more firmly than ever on the ground of rebellion? Though an unsullied integrity should rest upon all his transactions, and the homage of confidence and respect be awarded to him from every quarter of society, has not this man, by slighting the overtures of reconciliation, just plunged himself the deeper in the guilt of a wilful and determined ungodliness? Has not the creature exalted itself above the Creator; and in the pride of those accomplishments, which never would have invested his person had not they come to him from above, has he not, in the act of resisting the gospel, aggravated the provocation of his whole previous defiance to the author of it?

Thus much for all that is amiable, and for all that is manly, in the accomplishments of nature, when disjoined from the faith of Christianity. They take up a separate residence in the human character from the principle of godliness. Anterior to this religion, they go not to alleviate the guilt of our departure from the living God; and subsequently to this religion, they may blazon the character of him who stands out against it: but on the principles of a most clear and intelligent equity, they never can shield him from the condemnation and the curse of those who have neglected the great salvation.

The doctrine of the New-Testament will bear to be confronted with all that can be met or noticed on the face of human society. And we speak most confidently, to the experience of many who now hear us, when we say, that often, in the course of their

manifold transactions, have they met the man, whom the bribery of no advantage whatever could seduce into the slightest deviation from the path of integrity—the man, who felt his nature within him put into a state of the most painful indignancy, at every thing that bore upon it the character of a sneaking or dishonourable artifice—the man, who positively could not be at rest under the consciousness that he had ever betrayed, even to his own heart, the remotest symptom of such an inclination—and whom, therefore, the unaided law of justice and of truth has placed on a high and deserved eminence in the walks of honourable merchandise.

Let us not withhold from this character the tribute of its most rightful admiration; but let us further ask, if, with all that he thus possessed of native feeling and constitutional integrity, you have never observed in any such individual an utter emptiness of religion; and that God is not in all his thoughts; and that, when he does what happens to be at one with the will of the Lawgiver, it is not because he is impelled to it by a sense of its being the will of the Lawgiver, but because he is impelled to it by the working of his own instinctive sensibilities; and that, however fortunate, or however estimable these sensibilities are, they still consist with the habit of a mind that is in a state of total indifference about God? Have you never read in your own character, or in the observed character of others, that the claims of the Divinity may be entirely forgotten by the very man to whom society around him yield, and rightly yield, the homage of an unsullied and honourable reputation; that this man may have all his

foundations in the world; that every security on which he rests, and every enjoyment upon which his heart is set, lieth on this side of death; that a sense of the coming day on which God is to enter into judgment with him, is, to every purpose of practical ascendency, as good as expunged altogether from his bosom; that he is far in desire, and far in enjoyment, and far in habitual contemplation, away from that God who is not far from any one of us; that his extending credit, and his brightening prosperity, and his magnificent retreat from business, with all the splendour of its accommodations—that these are the futurities at which he terminates; and that he goes not in thought beyond them to that eternity, which, in the flight of a few little years, will absorb all, and annihilate all? In a word, have you never observed the man, who, with all that was right in mercantile principle, and all that was open and unimpeachable in the habit of his mercantile transactions, lived in a state of utter estrangement from the concerns of immortality? who, in reference to God, persisted, from one year to another, in the spirit of a deep slumber? who, in reference to the man that tries to awaken him out of his lethargy, recoils, with the most sensitive dislike, from the faithfulness of his ministrations? who, in reference to the Book which tells him of his nakedness and his guilt, never consults it with one practical aim, and never tries to penetrate beyond that aspect of mysteriousness which it holds out to an undiscerning world? who attends not church, or attends it with all the lifelessness of a form? who reads not his Bible, or reads it in the

discharge of a self-prescribed and unfruitful task? who prays not, or prays with the mockery of an unmeaning observation? and, in one word, who while surrounded by all those testimonies which give to man a place of moral distinction among his fellows, is living in utter carelessness about God, and about all the avenues which lead to him?

Now, attend for a moment to what that is which the man has, and to what that is which he has not. He has an attribute of character which is in itself pure, and lovely, and honorable, and of good report. He has a natural principle of integrity; and under its impulse he may be carried forward to such fine exhibitions of himself, as are worthy of all admiration. It is very noble, when the simple utterance of his word carries as much security along with it, as if he had accompanied that utterance by the signatures, and the securities, and the legal obligations, which are required of other men. It might tempt one to be proud of his species when he looks at the faith that is put in him by a distant correspondent, who, without one other hold of him than his honor, consigns to him the wealth of a whole flotilla, and sleeps in the confidence that it is safe. It is indeed an animating thought, amid the gloom of this world's depravity, when we behold the credit which one man puts in another, though separated by oceans and by continents; when he fixes the anchor of a sure and steady dependence on the reported honesty of one whom he never saw; when, with all his fears for the treachery of the varied elements, through which his property has to pass, he knows, that should it only arrive at the door of its destined agent, all his

fears and all his suspicions may be at an end. We know nothing finer than such an act of homage from one human being to another, when perhaps the diameter of the globe is between them; nor do we think that either the renown of her victories, or the wisdom of her counsels, so signalizes the country in which we live, as does the honourable dealing of her merchants; that all the glories of British policy, and British valour, are far eclipsed by the moral splendour which British faith has thrown over the name and the character of our nation; nor has she gathered so proud a distinction from all the tributaries of her power, as she has done from the awarded confidence of those men of all tribes, and colours, and languages, who look to our agency for the most faithful of all management, and to our keeping for the most unviolable of all custody.

There is no denying, then, the very extended prevalence of a principle of integrity in the commercial world; and he who has such a principle within him, has that to which all the epithets of our text may rightly be appropriated. But it is just as impossible to deny, that, with this thing which he has, there may be another thing which he has not. He may not have one duteous feeling of reverence which points upward to God. He may not have one wish, or one anticipation, which points forward to eternity. He may not have any sense of dependence on the Being who sustains him; and who gave him his very principle of honour, as part of that interior furniture which he has put into his bosom; and who surrounded him with the theatre on which he has come forward with the finest and most illustrious displays

of it; and who set the whole machinery of his sentiment and action a-going; and can, by a single word of his power, bid it cease from the variety, and cease from the gracefulness, of its movements. In other words, he is a man of integrity, and yet he is a man of ungodliness. He is a man born for the confidence and the admiration of his fellows, and yet a man whom his maker can charge with utter defection from all the principles of a spiritual obedience. He is a man whose virtues have blazoned his own character in time, and have upheld the interests of society, and yet a man who has not, by one movement of principle, brought himself nearer to the kingdom of heaven, than the most profligate of the species. The condemnation, that he is an alien from God, rests upon him in all the weight of its unmitigated severity. The threat, that they who forget God shall be turned into hell, will on the great day of its fell and sweeping operation, involve him among the wretched outcasts of eternity. That God from whom, while in the world, he withheld every due offering of gratitude, and remembrance, and universal subordination of habit and of desire, will show him to his face, how under the delusive garb of such sympathies as drew upon him the love of his acquaintances, and of such integrities as drew upon him their respect and their confidence, he was in fact a determined rebel against the authority of heaven; that not one commandment of the law, in the true extent of its interpretation, was ever fulfilled by him; that the pervading principle of obedience to this law, which is love to God, never had its ascendency over him; that the beseeching voice of the Lawgiver, so offen-

ded and so insulted—but who, nevertheless, devised in love a way of reconciliation for the guilty, never had the effect of recalling him; that, in fact, he neither had a wish for the friendship of God, nor cherished the hope of enjoying him, and that therefore, as he lived without hope, so he lived without God in the world; finding all his desire, and all his sufficiency, to be somewhere else, than in that favour which is better than life; and so, in addition to the curse of having continued not in all the words of the book of God's law to do them, entailing upon himself the mighty aggravation of having neglected all the offers of his gospel.

We say, then, of this natural virtue, what our Saviour said of the virtue of the Pharisees, many of whom were not extortioners, as other men—that, verily, it hath its reward. When disjoined from a sense of God, it is of no religious estimation whatever; nor will it lead to any religious blessing, either in time or in eternity. It has, however, its enjoyments annexed to it, just as a fine taste has its enjoyments annexed to it; and in these it is abundantly rewarded. It is exempted from that painfulness of inward feeling which nature has annexed to every act of departure from honesty. It is sustained by a conscious sense of rectitude and elevation. It is gratified by the homage of society; the members of which are ever ready to award the tribute of acknowledgment to those virtues that support the interests of society. And finally, it may be said, that prosperity, with some occasional variations is the general accompaniment of that credit, which every man of undeviating justice is sure to draw

around him. But what reward, will you tell us is due to him on the great day of the manifestation of God's righteousness, when, in fact, he has done nothing unto God? What recompence can be awarded to him out of those books which are then to be opened, and in which he stands recorded as a man overcharged with the guilt of spiritual idolatry? How shall God grant unto him the reward of a servant, when the service of God was not the principle of his doings in the world; and when neither the justice he rendered to others, nor the sensibility that he felt for them, bore the slightest character of an offering to his maker?

But wherever the religious principle has taken possession of the mind, it animates these virtues with a new spirit; and when so animated, all such things as are pure, and lovely, and just, and true, and honest, and of good report, have a religious importance and character belonging to them. The text forms part of an epistle addressed to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which were at Philippi; and the lesson of the text is matter of direct and authoritative enforcement, on all who are saints in Christ Jesus at the present day. Christianity, with the weight of its positive sanctions on the side of what is amiable and honorable in human virtue, causes such an influence to rest on the character of its genuine disciples, that, on the ground both of inflexible justice and ever-breathing charity, they are ever sure to leave the vast majority of the world behind them. Simplicity and godly sincerity form essential ingredients of that peculiarity by which they stand signalized in the midst of an ungodly generation. The true

friends of the gospel, tremblingly alive to the honour of their master's cause, blush for the disgrace that has been brought on it by men who keep its sabbaths, and yield an ostentatious homage to its doctrines and its sacraments. They utterly disclaim all fellowship with that vile association of cant and of duplicity, which has sometimes been exemplified, to the triumph of the enemies of religion; and they both feel the solemn truth, and act on the authority of the saying, that neither thieves, nor liars, nor extortioners, nor unrighteous persons, have any part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

DISCOURSE II.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AIDING AND AUGMENTING THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES.

ROMANS xiv, 18.

For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

We have already asserted the natural existence of such principles in the heart of man, as lead him to many graceful and to many honorable exhibitions of character. We have further asserted, that this formed no deduction whatever from that article of orthodoxy which affirms the utter depravity of our nature; that the essence of this depravity lies in man having broken loose from the authority of God, and delivered himself wholly up to the guidance of his own inclinations; that though some of these inclinations are in themselves amiable features of human character, and point in their effects to what is most useful to human society, yet devoid as they all are of any reference to the will and to the rightful sovereignty of the Supreme Being, they could not avert, or even so much as alleviate, that charge of ungodliness, which may be fully carried round amongst all the sons and daughters of the species; that they furnish not the materials of any valid or

satisfactory answer to the question, "What hast thou done unto God?" and that whether they are the desires of a native rectitude, or the desires of an instinctive benevolence, they go not to purge away the guilt of having no love, and no care, for the Being who formed and who sustains them.

But what is more. If the virtues and accomplishments of nature are at all to be admitted into the controversy between God and man, instead of forming any abatement upon the enormity of our guilt, they stamp upon it the reproach of a still deeper and more determined ingratitude. Let us conceive it possible, for a moment, that the beautiful personifications of scripture were all realized; that the trees of the forest clapped their hands unto God, and that the isles were glad at his presence; that the little hills shouted on every side, and the vallies covered over with corn sent forth their notes of rejoicing; that the sun and the moon praised him, and the stars of light joined in the solemn adoration; that the voice of glory to God was heard from every mountain and from every water-fall; and that all nature, animated throughout by the consciousness of a pervading and a presiding Deity, burst into one loud and universal song of gratulation. Would not a strain of greater loftiness be heard to ascend from those regions where the all-working God had left the traces of his own immensity, than from the tamer and the humbler scenery of an ordinary landscape? Would not you look for a gladder acclamation from the fertile field, than from the arid waste, where no character of grandeur made up for the barrenness that was around you? Would not the

goodly tree, compassed about with the glories of its summer foliage, lift up an anthem of louder gratitude, than the lowly shrub that grew beneath it? Would not the flower, from whose leaves every hue of loveliness was reflected, send forth a sweeter rapture than the russet weed, which never drew the eye of any admiring passenger? And in a word, wherever you saw the towering eminences of nature, or the garniture of her more rich and beauteous adornments, would it not be there that you looked for the deepest tones of devotion, or there for the tenderest and most exquisite of its melodies?

There is both the sublime of character, and the beauteous of character, exemplified upon man. We have the one in that high sense of honour, which no interest and no terror can seduce from any of its obligations. We have the other in that kindliness of feeling, which one look, or one sigh, of imploring distress, can touch into liveliest sympathy. Only grant, that we have nothing either in the constitution of our spirits, or in the structure of our bodies, which we did not receive; and that mind, with all its varieties, is as much the product of a creating hand, as matter in all its modifications; and then, on the face of human society, do we witness all the gradations of a moral scenery, which may be directly referred to the operation of him who worketh all in all. It is our belief, that, as to any effectual sense of God, there is as deep a slumber throughout the whole of this world's living and rational generations, as there is throughout all the diversities of its mute and unconscious materialism; and that to make our alienated spirits again alive unto the Father of

them, calls for as distinct and as miraculous an exertion of the Divinity, as would need to be put forth in the act of turning stones into the children of Abraham. Conceive this to be done then—and that a quickening and a realizing sense of the Deity pervaded all the men of our species—and that each knew how to refer his own endowments, with an adequate expression of gratitude to the unseen author of them—from whom we ask, of all these various individuals, would you look for the halleluiahs of devoutest ecstacy? Would it not be from him whom God had arrayed in the splendor of nature's brightest accomplishments? Would it not be from him, with whose constitutional feelings the movements of honour and benevolence were in fullest harmony? Would it not be from him whom his maker had cast into the happiest mould, and attempered into sweetest unison with all that was kind, and generous, and lovely, and ennobled by the loftiest emotions, and raised above his fellows into the finest spectacle of all that was graceful, and all that was manly? Surely, if the possession of these moralities be just another theme of acknowledgment to the Lord of the spirits of all flesh, then, if the acknowledgment be withheld, and these moralities have taken up their residence in the bosom of him who is utterly devoid of piety, they go to aggravate the reproach of his ingratitude; and to prove, that of all the men upon earth who are far from God, he stands at the widest distance, he remains proof against the weightiest claims, and he, of the dead in trespasses and sins, is the most profoundly asleep to the call of religion, and to the supremacy of its righteous obligations.

It is by argument such as this, that we would attempt to convince of sin, those who have a righteousness that is without godliness; and to prove, that, with the possession of such things as are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report, they in fact can only be admitted to reconciliation with God, on the same footing with the most worthless and profligate of the species; and to demonstrate, that they are in the very same state of need and of nakedness, and are therefore children of wrath, even as others; that it is only through faith in the preaching of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that they can be saved; and that, unless brought down from the delusive eminency of their own conscious attainments, they take their forgiveness through the blood of the Redeemer, and their sanctification through the spirit which is at his giving, they shall obtain no part in that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away.

But the gospel of Jesus Christ does something more than hold out a refuge to the guilty. It takes all those who accept of its overtures under its supreme and exclusive direction. It keeps by them in the way of counsel, and exhortation, and constant superintendence. The grace which it reveals, is a grace which not merely saves all men, but which teaches all men. He who is the proposed Saviour, also claims to be the alone master of those who put their trust in him. His cognizance extends itself over the whole line of their history; and there is not an affection of their heart, or a deed of their visible conduct, over which he does not assert the right of an authority that is above all control, and that refuses all rivalship.

Now, we want to point your attention to a distinction which obtains between one set and another set of his requirements. By the former, we are enjoined to practise certain virtues, which, separately from his injunction altogether, are in great demand, and in great reverence, amongst the members of society —such as compassion, and generosity, and justice, and truth; which, independently of the religious sanction they obtain from the law of the Saviour, are in themselves so lovely, and so honourable, and of such good report, that they are ever sure to carry general applause along with them, and thus to combine both the characteristics of our text—that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved of men.

But there is another set of requirements, where the will of God, instead of being seconded by the applause of men, is utterly at variance with it. There are some who can admire the generous sacrifices that are made to truth or to friendship, but who, without one opposing scruple, abandon themselves to all the excesses of riot and festivity, and are therefore the last to admire the puritanic sobriety of him whom they cannot tempt to put his chastity or his temperance away from him; though the same God, who bids us lie not one to another, also bids us keep the body under subjection, and to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Again, there are some in whose eyes an unvitiated delicacy looks a beauteous and an interesting spectacle, and an undeviating self-control looks a manly and respectable accomplishment; but who have no taste in themselves, and no admiration in others, for the

more direct exercises of religion; and who positively hate the strict and unbending preciseness of those who join in every ordinance, and on every returning night celebrate the praises of God in their family: and that, though the heavenly Lawgiver, who tells us to live righteously and soberly, tells us also to live godly in the present evil world. And lastly, there are some who have not merely a toleration, but a liking for all the decencies of an established observation; but who, with the homage they pay to sabbaths and to sacraments, nauseate the Christian principle in the supreme and regenerating vitality of its influences; who, under a general religiousness of aspect, are still in fact the children of the world—and therefore hate the children of light in all that is peculiar and essentially characteristic of that high designation; who understand not what is meant by having our conversation in heaven; and utter strangers to the separated walk, and the spiritual exercises, and the humble devotedness, and the consecrated affections, of the new creature in Jesus Christ, shrink from them altogether as from the extravagancies of a fanaticism in which they have no share, and with which they can have no sympathy—and all this, though the same scripture which prescribes the exercises of household and of public religion, lays claim to an undivided authority over all the desires and affections of the soul; and will admit of no compromise between God and the world; and insists upon an utter deadness to the one, and a most vehement sensibility to the other; and elevates the standard of loyalty to the Father of our Spirits, to the lofty pitch

of loving him with all our strength, and of doing all things to his glory.

Let these examples serve to impress a real and experimental distinction which obtains between two sets of virtues; between those which possess the single ingredient of being approved by God, while they want the ingredient of being also acceptable unto men—and those which possess both these ingredients, and to the observance of which, therefore, we may be carried by a regard to the will of God, without any reference to the opinion of men—or by a regard to the opinion of men, without any reference to the will of God. Among the first class of virtues we would assign a foremost place to all those inward and spiritual graces which enter into the obedience of the affections—highly approved of God, but not at all acceptable to the general taste, or carrying along with them the general congeniality of the world. And then, though they do not possess the ingredient of God's approbation in a way so separate and unmixed, we would say that abstinence from profane language, and attendance upon church, and a strict keeping of the sabbath, and the exercises of family worship, and the more rigid degrees of sobriety, and a fearful avoidance of every encroachment on temperance or chastity, rank more appropriately with the first than with the second class of virtues; for though there be many in society who have no religion, and yet to whom several of these virtues are acceptable, yet you will allow, that they do not convey such a universal popularity along with them, as certain other virtues which belong indispu-

tably to the second class. These are the virtues which have a more obvious and immediate bearing on the interest of society—such as the truth which is punctual to all its engagements, and the honor which never disappoints the confidence it has inspired, and the compassion which cannot look unmoved at any of the symptoms of human wretchedness, and the generosity which scatters unsparingly around it. These are virtues which God has enjoined, and in behalf of which man lifts the testimony of a loud and ready admiration—virtues in which there is a meeting and a combining of both the properties of our text; so that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both approved of God, and acceptable unto men.

Let a steady hold be kept of this distinction, and it will be found capable of being turned to a very useful application, both to the object of illustrating principle, and to the important object of detecting character. For this purpose, let us carry the distinction along with us, and make it subservient to the establishment of two or three successive observations.

First. A man may possess, to a considerable extent, the second class of virtues, and not possess so much as one iota of the religious principle; and that, among other reasons, because a man may feel a value for one of the attributes which belongs to this class of virtues, and have no value whatever for the other attribute. If justice be both approved by God, and acceptable to men, he may on the latter property alone, be induced to the strictest maintenance of this virtue—and that without suffering its former property to have any practical influence

whatever on any of his habits, or any of his determinations: and the same with every other virtue belonging to this second class. As residing in his character, there may not be the ingredient of godliness in any one of them. He may be well reported on account of them by men; but with God he may lie under as fearful a severity of reckoning, as if he wanted them altogether. Surely, it does not go to alleviate the withdrawment of your homage from God, that you have such an homage to the opinion of men, as influences you to do things, to the doing of which the law of God is not able to influence you. It cannot be said to palliate the revolting of your inclinations from the Creator, that you have transferred them all to the creature; and given an ascendency to the voice of human reputation, which you have refused to the voice and authority of your Lawgiver in heaven. Your want of subordination to him, is surely not made up by the respectful subordination that you render to the taste or the judgment of society. And in addition to this, we would have you to remember, that though other constitutional principles, besides a regard to the opinion of others, helped to form the virtues of the second class upon your character; though compassion, and generosity, and truth, would have broken out into full and flourishing display upon you, and that, just because you had a native sensibility, or a native love of rectitude; yet, if the first ingredient be wanting, if a regard to the approbation of God have no share in the production of the moral accomplishment—then all the morality you can pretend to, is of as little religious estimation, and is as utterly disconnected

with the rewards of religion, as all the elegance of taste you can pretend to, or all the raptured love of music you can pretend to, or all the vigour and dexterity of bodily exercise you can pretend to. All these, in reference to the great question of immortality, profit but little; and it is godliness alone that is profitable unto all things. It is upon this consideration that we would have you to open your eyes to the nakedness of your condition in the sight of God; to look to the full weight of the charge that he may prefer against you; to estimate the fearful extent of the deficiency under which you labour; to resist the delusive whispering of peace, when there is no peace; and to understand, that the wrath of God abideth on every child of nature, however rich he may be in the virtues and accomplishments of nature.

But again. This view of the distinction between the two sets of virtues, will serve to explain how it is, that, in the act of turning unto God, the one class of them appears to gather more copiously, and more conspicuously, upon the front of a renewed character, than the other class; how it is, that the former wear a more unequivocal aspect of religiousness than the latter; how it is, that an air of gravity, and decency, and seriousness, looks to be more in alliance with sanctity, than the air either of open integrity, or of smiling benevolence; how it is, that the most ostensible change in the habit of a converted profligate, is that change in virtue of which he withdraws himself from the companions of his licentiousness; and that to renounce the dissipations of his former life stands far more frequently, or, at least, far more visibly,

associated with the act of putting on Christianity, than to renounce the dishonesties of his former life. It is true, that, by the law of the gospel, he is laid as strictly under the authority of the commandment to live righteously, as of the commandment to live soberly. But there is a compound character in those virtues which are merely social; and the presence of the one ingredient serves to throw into the shade, or to disguise altogether, the presence of the other ingredient. There is a greater number of irreligious men, who are at the same time just in their dealings, than there is of irreligious men, who are at the same time pure and temperate in their habits; and therefore it is, that justice, even the most scrupulous, is not so specifical, and, of course, not so satisfying a mark of religion, as is a sobriety that is rigid and unviolable. And all this helps to explain how it is, that when a man comes under the power of religion, to abandon the levities of his past conduct is an event which stands far more noticeably out upon him, at this stage of his history, than to abandon the iniquities of his past conduct; that the most characteristic transformation which takes place at such a time, is a transformation from thoughtlessness, and from licentious gaiety, and from the festive indulgencies of those with whom he is wont to run to all those excesses of riot, of which the Apostle says, that they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God: for even then, and in the very midst of all his impiety, he may have been kind-hearted, and there might be no room upon his person for a visible transformation from inhumanity of character; even

then, he may have been honourable, and there might be as little room for a visible transformation from fraudulency of character.

Thirdly. Nothing is more obvious than the antipathy that is felt by a certain class of religionists against the preaching of good works; and the antipathy is assuredly well and warrantably grounded, when it is such a preaching as goes to reduce the importance, or to infringe upon the simplicity, of the great doctrine of justification by faith. But along with this, may there not be remarked the toleration with which they will listen to a discourse upon one set of good works, and the evident coldness and dislike with which they listen to a discourse on another set of them; how a pointed remonstrance against sabbath breaking sounds in their ears, as if more in character from the pulpit, than a pointed remonstrance against the commission of theft, or the speaking of evil; how an eulogium on the observance of family worship feels, in their taste, to be more impregnated with the spirit of sacredness, than an eulogium on the virtues of the shop, or of the market-place; and that, while the one is approved of as having about it the solemn and the suitable characteristics of godliness, the other is stigmatized as a piece of barren, heartless, heathenish, and philosophic morality? Now, this antipathy to the preaching of the latter species of good works, has something peculiar in it. It is not enough to say, that it arises from a sensitive alarm about the stability of the doctrine of justification; for let it be observed, that this doctrine stands opposed to the merit not of one particular class of performances, but to the merit of

all performances whatsoever. It is just as unscriptural a detraction from the great truth of salvation by faith, to rest our acceptance with God on the duties of prayer, or of rigid sabbath keeping, or of strict and untainted sobriety, as to rest it on the punctual fulfilment of all your bargains, and on the extent of your manifold liberalities. It is not, then, a mere zeal about the great article of justification which lies at the bottom of that peculiar aversion that is felt towards a sermon on some social or humane accomplishment; and that is not felt towards a sermon on sobermindedness, or a sermon on the observation of the sacrament, or a sermon on any of those performances which bear a more direct and exclusive reference to God. We shall find the explanation of this phenomenon, which often presents itself in the religious world, in that distinction of which we have just required that it should be kept in steady hold, and followed into its various applications. The aversion in question is often, in fact, a well founded aversion, to a topic, which, though religious in the matter of it, may, from the way in which it is proposed, be altogether secular in the principle of it. It is resistance to what is deemed, and justly deemed, an act of usurpation on the part of certain virtues, which, when unanimated by a sentiment of godliness, are entitled to no place whatever in the ministrations of the gospel of Christ. It proceeds from a most enlightened fear, lest that should be held to make up the whole of religion, which is in fact utterly devoid of the spirit of religion; and from a true and tender apprehension, lest, on the possession of certain accomplishments, which secure

a fleeting credit throughout the little hour of this world's history, deluded man should look forward to his eternity with hope, and upward to his God with complacency—while he carries not on his forehead one vestige of the character of heaven, one lineament of the aspect of godliness.

And lastly. The first class of virtues bear the character of religiousness more *strongly*, just because they bear that character more *singly*. The people who are without, might, no doubt, see in every real Christian the virtues of the second class also; but these virtues do not belong to them peculiarly and exclusively. For though it be true, that every religious man must be honest, the converse does not follow, that every honest man must be religious. And it is because the social accomplishments do not form the specific, that neither do they form the most prominent, and distinguishing marks of Christianity. They may also be recognized as features in the character of men, who utterly repudiate the whole style and doctrine of the New Testament; and hence a very prevalent impression in society, that the faith of the gospel does not bear so powerfully and so directly on the relative virtues of human conduct. A few instances of hypocrisy amongst the more serious professors of our faith, serve to rivet the impression, and to give it perpetuity in the world. One single example, indeed, of sanctimonious duplicity, will suffice, in the judgment of many, to cover the whole of vital and orthodox Christianity with disgrace. The report of it will be borne in triumph amongst the companies of the irreligious. The man who pays no homage to sabbaths or to sacraments, will

be contrasted in the open, liberal, and manly style, of all his transactions, with the low cunning of this drivelling methodistical pretender; and the loud laugh of a multitude of scorners, will give a force and a swell to this public outcry against the whole character of the sainthood.

Now, this delusion on the part of the unbelieving world is very natural, and ought not to excite our astonishment. We are not surprised, from the reasons already adverted to, that the truth, and the justice, and the humanity, and the moral loveliness, which do in fact belong to every new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord, should miss their observation; or, at least, fail to be recognized among the other more obvious characteristics into which believers have been translated by the faith of the gospel. But, on this very subject there is a tendency to delusion on the part of the disciples of the faith. They need to be reminded of the solemn and indispensable religiousness of the second class of virtues. They need to be told, that though these virtues do possess the one ingredient of being approved by men, and may, on this single account, be found to reside in the characters of those who live without God—yet, that they also possess the other ingredient of being acceptable unto God; and, on this latter account, should be made the subjects of their most strenuous cultivation. They must not lose sight of the one ingredient in the other; or stigmatize, as so many fruitless and insignificant moralities, those virtues which enter as component parts into the service of Christ; so that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved by men. They must

not expend all their warmth on the high and peculiar doctrine of the New Testament, while they offer a cold and reluctant admission to the practical duties of the New Testament. The Apostle has bound the one to the other by a tie of immediate connexion. Wherefore, lie not one to another, as ye have put off the old man and his deeds, and put on the new man, which is formed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. Here the very obvious and popular accomplishment of truth is grafted on the very peculiar doctrine of regeneration: and you altogether mistake the kind of transforming influence which the faith of the gospel brings along with it, if you think that uprightness of character does not emerge at the same time with godliness of character; or that the virtues of society do not form upon the believer into as rich and varied an assemblage, as do the virtues of the sanctuary; or that, while he puts on those graces which are singly acceptable to God, he falls behind in any of those graces which are both acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Let, therefore, every pretender to Christianity vindicate this assertion by his own personal history in the world. Let him not lay his godliness aside, when he is done with the morning devotion of his family; but carry it abroad with him, and make it his companion and his guide through the whole business of the day; always bearing in his heart the sentiment, that thou God seest me; and remembering, that there is not one hour that can flow, or one occasion that can cast up, where his law is not present with some imperious exaction or other. It is false, that the principle of Christian sanctification posses-

ses no influence over the familiarities of civil and ordinary life. It is altogether false, that godliness is a virtue of such a lofty and monastic order, as to hold its dominion only over the solemnities of worship, or over the solitudes of prayer and spiritual contemplation. If it be substantially a grace within us at all, it will give a direction and a color to the whole of our path in society. There is not one conceivable transaction, amongst all the manifold varieties of human employment, which it is not fitted to animate by its spirit. There is nothing that meets us too homely, to be beyond the reach of obtaining, from its influence, the stamp of something celestial. It offers to take the whole man under its ascendency, and to subordinate all his movements: nor does it hold the place which rightfully belongs to it, till it be vested with a presiding authority over the entire system of human affairs. And therefore it is, that the preacher is not bringing down Christianity—he is only sending it abroad over the field of its legitimate operation, when he goes with it to your counting-houses, and there rebukes every selfish inclination that would carry you ever so little within the limits of fraudulency; when he enters into your chambers of agency, and there detects the character of falsehood, which lurks under all the plausibility of your multiplied and excessive charges; when he repairs to the crowded market-place, and pronounces of every bargain, over which truth, in all the strictness of quakerism, has not presided, that it is tainted with moral evil; when he looks into your shops, and, in listening to the contest of argument between him who magnifies his article, and him who pretends

to undervalue it, he calls it the contest of avarice, broken loose from the restraints of integrity. He is not, by all this, vulgarizing religion, or giving it the hue and the character of earthliness. He is only asserting the might and the universality of its sole pre-eminence over man. And therefore it is, that if possible to solemnize his hearers to the practice of simplicity and godly sincerity in their dealings, he would try to make the odiousness of sin stand visibly out on every shade and modification of dishonesty; and to assure them that if there be a place in our world, where the subtle evasion, and the dexterous imposition, and the sly but gainful concealment, and the report which misleads an inquirer, and the gloss which tempts the unwary purchaser—are not only currently practised in the walks of merchandise, but, when not carried forward to the glare and the literality of falsehood, are beheld with general connivance; if there be a place where the sense of morality has thus fallen, and all the nicer delicacies of conscience are overborne in the keen and ambitious rivalry of men hasting to be rich, and wholly given over to the idolatrous service of the god of this world—then that is the place, the smoke of whose iniquity rises before Him who sitteth on the throne, in a tide of deepest and most revolting abomination.

And here we have to complain of the public injustice that is done to Christianity, when one of its ostentatious professors has acted the hypocrite, and stands in disgraceful exposure before the eyes of the world. We advert to the readiness with which this is turned into a matter of general impeachment, against every appearance of seriousness; and how

loud the exclamation is against the religion of all who signalize themselves; and that, if the aspect of godliness be so very decided as to become an aspect of peculiarity, then is this peculiarity, converted into a ground of distrust and suspicion against the bearer of it. Now, it so happens, that, in the midst of this world lying in wickedness, a man, to be a Christian at all, must signalize himself. Neither is he in a way of salvation, unless he be one of a very peculiar people; nor would we precipitately consign him to discredit, even though the peculiarity be so very glaring as to provoke the charge of methodism. But, instead of making one man's hypocrisy act as a drawback upon the reputation of a thousand, we submit, if it would not be a fairer and more philosophical procedure, just to betake one's-self to the method of induction—to make a walking survey over the town, and record an inventory of all the men in it who are so very far gone as to have the voice of psalms in their family; or as to attend the meetings of fellowship for prayer; or as scrupulously to abstain from all that is questionable in the amusements of the world; or as, by any other marked and visible symptom whatever, to stand out to general observation as the members of a saintly and separated society. We know, that even of such there are a few, who, if Paul were alive, would move him to weep for the reproach they bring upon his master. But we also know, that the blind and impetuous world exaggerates the few into the many; inverts the process of atonement altogether, by laying the sins of one man upon the multitude; looks at their general aspect of sanctity, and is so engrossed with this single ex-

pression of character, as to be insensible to the noble uprightness, and the tender humanity with which this sanctity is associated. And therefore it is, that we offer the assertion, and challenge all to its most thorough and searching investigation, that the Christianity of these people, which many think does nothing but cant, and profess, and run after ordinances, has augmented their honesties and their liberalities, and that, tenfold beyond the average character of society; that these are the men we oftenest meet with in the mansions of poverty—and who look with the most wakeful eye over all the sufferings and necessities of our species—and who open their hand most widely in behalf of the imploring and the friendless—and to whom, in spite of all their mockery, the men of the world are sure, in the negociations of business, to award the readiest confidence—and who sustain the most splendid part in all those great movements of philanthrophy which bear on the general interests of mankind—and who, with their eye full upon eternity, scatter the most abundant blessings over the fleeting pilgrimage of time—and who, while they hold their conversation in heaven, do most enrich the earth we tread upon, with all those virtues which secure enjoyment to families, and uphold the order and prosperity of the commonwealth.

DISCOURSE III.

THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS IN PROMOTING THE HONESTIES OF MERCANTILE INTERCOURSE.

LUKE vi, 33.

And if you do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

It is to be remarked of many of those duties, the performance of which confers the least distinction upon an individual, that they are at the same time the very duties, the violation of which would confer upon him the largest measure of obloquy and disgrace. Truth and justice do not serve to elevate a man so highly above the average morality of his species, as would generosity, or ardent friendship, or devoted and disinterested patriotism. The former are greatly more common than the latter; and, on that account, the presence of them is not so calculated to signalize the individual to whom they belong. But that is one account, also, why the absence of them would make him a more monstrous exception to the general run of character in society. And, accordingly, while it is true, that there are more men of integrity in the world, than there are men of very wide and liberal beneficence—it is also true, that one act of falsehood, or one act of dishonesty, would

stamp a far more burning infamy on the name of a transgressor, than any defect in those more heroic charities, and extraordinary virtues, of which humanity is capable.

So it is far more disgraceful not to be just to another, than not to be kind to him; and, at the same time, an act of kindness may be held in higher positive estimation than an act of justice. The one is my right—nor is there any call for the homage of a particular testimony when it is rendered. The other is additional to my right—the offering of a spontaneous good will, which I had no title to exact; and which, therefore when rendered to me, excites in my bosom the cordiality of a warmer acknowledgment. And yet, our Saviour, who knew what was in man, saw, that much of the apparent kindness of nature, was resolvable into the real selfishness of nature; that much of the good done unto others, was done in the hope that these others would do something again. And, we believe, it would be found by an able analyst of the human character, that this was the secret but substantial principle of many of the civilities and hospitalities of ordinary intercourse—that if there were no expectation either of a return in kind, or of a return in gratitude, or of a return in popularity, many of the sweetening and cementing virtues of a *neighbourhood would be* practically done away—all serving to prove, that a multitude of virtues, which, in effect, promoted the comfort and the interest of others, were tainted in principle by a latent regard to one's own interest; and that thus being the fellowship of those who did good, either as a return for the good done unto them,

or who did good in hope of such a return, it might be, in fact, what our Saviour characterizes it in the text—the fellowship of sinners.

But if to do that which is unjust, is still more disgraceful than not to do that which is kind, it would prove more strikingly than before, how deeply sin had tainted the moral constitution of our species—could it be shown, that the great practical restraint on the prevalence of this more disgraceful thing in society, is the tie of that common selfishness which actuates and characterizes all its members. It were a curious but important question, were it capable of being resolved—if men did not feel it their interest to be honest, how much of the actual doings of honesty would still be kept up in the world? It is our own opinion of the nature of man, that it has its honourable feelings, and its instinctive principles of rectitude, and its constitutional love of truth and of integrity; and that, on the basis of these, a certain portion of uprightness would remain amongst us, without the aid of any prudence, or any calculation whatever. All this we have fully conceded; and have already attempted to demonstrate, that, in spite of it, the character of man is thoroughly pervaded by the very essence of sinfulness; because, with all the native virtues which adorn it, there adheres to it that foulest of all spiritual deformities—unconcern about God, and even antipathy to God. It has been argued against the orthodox doctrine of the universality of human corruption, that even without the sphere of the operation of the gospel, there do occ so many engaging specimens of worth and bene lence in society. The reply is, that this may be

deduction from the doctrine whatever, but be even an aggravation of it—should the very men who exemplify so much of what is amiable, carry in their hearts an indifference to the will of that Being who thus hath formed, and thus hath embellished them. But it would be a heavy deduction indeed, not from the doctrine, but from its hostile and opposing argument, could it be shown, that the vast majority of all equitable dealing amongst men, is performed, not on the principle of honour at all, but on the principle of selfishness—that this is the soil upon which the honesty of the world mainly flourishes, and is sustained; that, were the connexion dissolved between justice to others and our own particular advantage, this would go very far to banish the observation of justice from the earth; that, generally speaking, men are honest, not because they are lovers of God, and not even because they are lovers of virtue, but because they are lovers of their ownselves—insomuch, that if it were possible to disjoin the good of self altogether from the habit of doing what was fair, as well as from the habit of doing what was kind to the people around us, this would not merely isolate the children of men from each other, in respect of the obligations of beneficence, but it would arm them into an undisguised hostility against each other, in respect to their rights. The mere disinterested principle would set up a feeble barrier, indeed, against a desolating tide of selfishness, now set loose from the consideration of its own advantage. The genuine depravity of the human heart would burst forth and show itself in its true characters; and the world in which we live be

transformed into a scene of unblushing fraud, of open and lawless depredation.

And, perhaps, after all, the best way of arriving practically at the solution of this question would be, not by a formal induction of particular cases, but by committing the matter to the gross and general experience of those who are most conversant in the affairs of business.—There is a sort of undefinable impression you all have upon this subject, on the justness of which however, we are disposed to lay a very considerable stress—an impression gathered out of the mass of the recollections of a whole life—an impression founded on what you may have observed in the history of your own doings—a kind of tact that you have acquired as the fruit of your repeated intercourse with men, and of the manifold transactions that you have had with them, and of the number of times in which you have been personally implicated with the play of human passions, and human interests. It is our own conviction, that a well exercised merchant could cast a more intelligent glance at this question, than a well exercised metaphysician; and therefore do we submit its decision to those of you who have hazarded most largely, and most frequently, on the faith of agents, and customers, and distant correspondents. We know the fact of a very secure and well warranted confidence in the honesty of others, being widely prevalent amongst you; and that, were it not for this, all the interchanges of trade would be suspended; and [illegible] confidence is the very soul and life of comm[illegible] activity; and it is delightful to think, how t[illegible]

man can suffer all the wealth which belongs to him to depart from under his eye, and to traverse the mightiest oceans and continents of our world, and to pass into the custody of men whom he never saw. And it is a sublime homage, one should think, to the honourable and high-minded principles of our nature, that, under their guardianship, the adverse hemispheres of the globe should be bound together in safe and profitable merchandise; and that thus one should sleep with a bosom undisturbed by jealousy, in Britain, who has all, and more than all his property treasured in the warehouses of India—and that, just because there he knows there is vigilance to defend it, and activity to dispose of it, and truth to account for it, and all those trusty virtues which ennoble the character of man to shield it from injury, and send it back again in an increasing tide of opulence to his door.

There is no question, then, as to the fact of a very extended practical honesty, between man and man, in their intercourse with each other. The only question is, as to the reason of the fact. Why is it, that he whom you have trusted acquits himself of his trust with such correctness and fidelity? Whether is his mind, in so doing, most set upon your interest or upon his own? Whether is it because he seeks your advantage in it, or because he finds in it his own advantage? Tell us to which of the two concerns he is most tremblingly alive—to your property, or to his own character? and whether, upon the last of these feelings, he may not be more forcibly impelled to equitable dealing than upon the first of them? We well know, that there is room enough in

his bosom for both; but to determine how powerfully selfishness is blended with the punctualities and the integrities of business, let us ask those who can speak most soundly and experimentally on the subject, what would be the result, if the element of selfishness were so detached from the operations of trade, that there was no such thing as a man suffering in his prosperity, because he suffered in his good name; that there was no such thing as a desertion of custom and employment coming upon the back of a blasted credit, and a tainted reputation; in a word, if the only security we had of man was his principles, and that his interest flourished and augmented just as surely without his principles as with them? Tell us, if the hold we have of a man's own personal advantage were thus broken down, in how far the virtues of the mercantile world would survive it? Would not the world of trade sustain as violent a derangement on this mighty hold being cut asunder, as the world of nature would on the suspending of the law of gravitation? Would not the whole system, in fact, fall to pieces, and be dissolved? Would not men, when thus released from the magical chain of their own interest, which bound them together into a fair and seeming compact of principle, like dogs of rapine, let loose upon their prey, overleap the barrier which formerly restrained them? Does not this prove, that selfishness, after all, is the grand principle on which the brotherhood of the human race is made to hang together; and that he who can make the wrath of man to praise him, has also, upon the selfishness of man, caused a most beauteous order of wide and useful intercourse to be suspended?

But let us here stop to observe, that, while there is much in this contemplation to magnify the wisdom of the Supreme Contriver, there is also much in it to humble man, and to convict him of the deceitfulness of that moral complacency with which he looks to his own character, and his own attainments. There is much in it to demonstrate, that his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and that the idolatry of self, however hidden in its operation, may be detected in almost every one of them. God may combine the separate interests of every individual of the human race, and the strenuous prosecution of these interests by each of them, into a harmonious system of operation, for the good of one great and extended family. But if, on estimating the character of each individual member of that family, we shall find that the mainspring of his actions is the urgency of a selfish inclination; and that to this his very virtues are subordinate; and that even the honesties which mark his conduct are chiefly, though, perhaps, insensibly due to the selfishness which actuates and occupies his whole heart;—then, let the semblance be what it may, still the reality of the case accords with the most mortifying representations of the New Testament. The moralities of nature are but the moralities of a day, and will cease to be applauded when this world, the only theatre of their applause, is burnt up. They are but the blossoms of that rank efflorescence which is nourished on the soil of human corruption, and can never bring forth fruit unto immortality. The discerner of all secrets sees that they emanate from a principle which is at utter war with the charity that prepares *for the enjoyments*, and that glows

in the bosoms of the celestial; and, therefore, though highly esteemed among men, they may be in His sight an abomination.

Let us, if possible, make this still clearer to your apprehension, by descending more minutely into particulars. There is not one member of the great mercantile family, with whom there does not obtain a reciprocal interest between himself and all those who compose the circle of his various correspondents. He does them good; but his eye is all the while open to the expectation of their doing him something again. They minister to him all the profits of his employment; but not unless he minister to them of his service, and attention, and fidelity. Insomuch, that if his credit abandon him, his prosperity will also abandon him. If he forfeit the confidence of others, he will also forfeit their custom along with it. So that, in perfect consistency with interest being the reigning idol of his soul, he may still be, in every way, as sensitive of encroachment upon his reputation, as he would be of encroachment upon his property; and be as vigilant, to the full, in guarding his name against the breath of calumny, or suspicion, as in guarding his estate against the inroads of a depredator. Now, this tie of reciprocity, which binds him into fellowship and good faith with society at large, will some times, in the mere course of business, and its unlooked-for fluctuations, draw one or two individuals into a still more special intimacy with himself. There may be a lucrative partnership, in which it is the pressing necessity of each individual, that all of them, for a time at least, stick closely and steadily together. Or there may be a thriving

interchange of commodities struck out, where it is the mutual interest of all who are concerned, that each take his assigned part and adhere to it. Or there may be a promising arrangement devised, which it needs concert and understanding to effectuate; and, for which purpose, several may enter into a skilful and well ordered combination. We are neither saying that this is very general in the mercantile world, or that it is in the slightest degree unfair. But you must be sensible, that, amid the reelings and movements of the great trading society, the phenomenon sometimes offers itself of a groupe of individuals who have entered into some compact of mutual accommodation, and who, therefore, look as if they were isolated from the rest by the bond of some more strict and separate alliance. All we aim at, is to gather illustration to our principle, out of the way in which the members of this associated cluster conduct themselves to each other; how such a cordiality may pass between them, as, one could suppose, to be the cordiality of genuine friendship; how such an intercourse might be maintained among their families, as might look like the intercourse of unmingled affection; how such an exuberance of mutual hospitality might be poured forth as to recal those poetic days when avarice was unknown and men lived in harmony together on the fruits of one common inheritance; and how nobly disdainful each member of the combination appeared to be of such little savings, as could be easily surrendered to the general good and adjustment of the whole concern. And all this, you will observe, so long as the concern prospered, *and it was for the interest* of each to abide by

its, and the respective accounts current gladdened the heart of every individual, by the exhibition of an abundant share of the common benefit to himself. But then, every such system of operations comes to an end. And what we ask is, if it be at all an unlikely evolution of our nature, that the selfishness which lay in wrapt concealment, during the progress of these transactions, should now come forward and put out to view its cloven foot, when they draw to their termination? And as the tie of reciprocity gets looser, is it not a very possible thing, that the murmurs of something like unfair or unhandsome conduct should get louder? And that a fellowship, hitherto carried forward in smiles, should break up in reproaches? And that the whole character of this fellowship should show itself more unequivocally as it comes nearer to its close? And that some of its members, as they are becoming disengaged from the bond of mutual interest, should also become disengaged from the bond of those mutual delicacies and proprieties, and even honesties, which had heretofore marked the whole of their intercourse?—Insomuch, that a matter in which all the parties looked so fair, and magnanimous, and liberal, might at length degenerate into a contest of keen appropriation, a scramble of downright and undisguised selfishness?

But though this may happen sometimes, we are far from saying that it will happen generally. It could not, in fact, without such an exposure of character, as might not merely bring a man down in the estimation of those from whom he is now withdrawing himself, but also in the estimation of that general public with whom he is still linked; and on

whose opinion of him there still rests the dependence of a strong personal interest. To estimate precisely the whole influence of this consideration, or the degree in which honesty of character is resolvable into selfishness of character, it would be necessary to suppose, that the tie of reciprocity was dissolved, not merely between the individual and those with whom he had been more particularly and more intimately associated—but that the tie of reciprocity was dissolved between the individual and the whole of his former acquaintanceship in business. Now, the situation which comes nearest to this, is that of a man on the eve of bankruptcy, and with no sure hope of so retrieving his circumstances as again to emerge into credit, and be restored to some employment of gain or of confidence. If he have either honorable or religious feelings, then character, as connected with principle may still, in his eyes, be something; but character, as connected with prudence, or the calculations of interest, may now be nothing. In the dark hour of the desperation of his soul, he may feel, in fact, that he has nothing to lose: and let us now see how he will conduct himself, when thus released from that check of reputation which formerly held him. In these circumstances, if you have ever seen the man abandoned himself to utter regardlessness of all the honesties which at one time adorned him, and doing such disgraceful things as he would have spurned at the very suggestion of, in the days of his prosperity; and, forgetful of his former name, practising all possible shifts of duplicity to prolong the credit of a tottering establishment; and to keep himself afloat for a few

months of torture and restlessness, weaving such a web of entanglement around his many friends and companions, as shall most surely implicate some of them in his fall; and, as the crisis approaches, plying his petty wiles how to survive the coming ruin, and to gather up of its fragments to his family. O! how much is there here to deplore; and who can be so ungenerous as to stalk in unrelenting triumph over the helplessness of so sad an overthrow! But if ever such an exhibition meet your eye, while we ask you not to withhold your pity from the unfortunate, we ask you also to read in it a lesson of worthless and sunken humanity; how even its very virtues are tinctured with corruption; and that the honour, and the truth and the equity, with which man proudly thinks his nature to be embellished, are often reared on the basis of selfishness, and lie prostrate in the dust when that basis is cut away.

But other instances may be quoted, which go still more satisfactorily to prove the very extended influence of selfishness on the moral judgments of our species; and how readily the estimate, which a man forms on the question of right and wrong, accommodates itself to his own interest. There is a strong general reciprocity of advantage between the government of a country and all its inhabitants. The one party, in this relation, renders a revenue for the expenses of the state. The other party renders back again protection from injustice and violence. Were the means furnished by the former withheld, the benefit conferred by the latter would cease to be administered. So that, with the government, and the public at large, nothing can be more strict, and

more indispensable, than the tie of reciprocity that is between them. But this is not felt, and therefore not acted upon by the separate individuals who compose that public. The reciprocity does not come home with a sufficiently pointed and personal application to each of them. Every man may calculate, that though he, on the strength of some dexterous evasions, were to keep back of the tribute that is due by him, the mischief that would recoil upon himself is divided with the rest of his countrymen; and the portion of it which comes to his door would be so very small, as to be altogether insensible. To all feeling he will just be as effectually sheltered, by the power and the justice of his country, whether he pay his taxes in full, or, under the guise of some skilful concealment, pay them but partially; and therefore, to every practical effect, the tie of reciprocity, between him and his sovereign, is in a great measure dissolved. Now, what is the actual adjustment of the moral sense, and moral conduct, of the population, to this state of matters? It is quite palpable. Subterfuges, which, in private business, would be held to be disgraceful, are not held to be so disgraceful in this department of a man's personal transactions. The cry of indignation, which would be lifted up against the falsehood or dishonesty of a man's dealings in his own neighbourhood, is mitigated or unheard, though, in his dealings with the state, there should be the very same relaxation of principle. On this subject, there is a connivance of popular feeling, which, if extended to the whole of human traffic, would banish all its securities from the world. Giving reason to believe, that much of the good done

among men, is done on the expectation of a good that will be rendered back again; and that many of the virtues, by which the fellowship of human beings is regulated and sustained, still leave the imputation unredeemed, of its being a fellowship of sinners; and that both the practice of morality, and the demand for it, are measured by the operation of a self-love, which, so far from signalizing any man, or preparing him for eternity, he holds in common with the fiercest and most degenerate of his species; and that, apart from the consideration of his own interest, simplicity and godly sincerity are, to a great degree, unknown; insomuch, that though God has interposed with a law, of giving unto all their dues, and tribute to whom tribute is due—we may venture an affirmation of the vast majority of this tribute, that it is rendered for wrath's sake, and not for conscience's sake. Of so little effect is unsupported and solitary conscience to stem the tide of selfishness. And it is chiefly when honesty and truth go overbearingly along with this tide, that the voice of man is lifted up to acknowledge them, and his heart becomes feelingly alive to a sense of their obligations.

And let us here just ask, in what relation of criminality does he who uses a contraband article stand to him who deals in it? In precisely the same relation that a receiver of stolen goods stands to a thief or a depredator. There may be some who revolt at the idea of being so classified. But, if the habit we have just denounced can be fastened on men of rank and seemly reputation, let us just humble ourselves into the admission of how little the righteous practice of the world has the foundation of

righteous principle to sustain it; how feeble are the securities of rectitude, had it nothing to uphold it but its own native charms, and native obligations; how society is held together, only because the grace of God can turn to account the worthless propensities of the individuals who compose it; and how, if the virtues of fidelity, and truth, and justice, had not the prop of selfishness to rest upon, they would, with the exception of a few scattered remnants, take their departure from the world, and leave it a prey to the anarchy of human passions—to the wild misrule of all those depravities which agitate and deform our ruined nature.

The very same exhibition of our nature may be witnessed in almost every parish of our sister kingdom, where the people render a revenue to the minister of religion, and the minister renders back again a return, it is true—but not such a return, as, in the estimation of gross and ordinary selfishness, is at all deemed an equivalent for the sacrifice which has been made. In this instance, too, that law of reciprocity which reigns throughout the common transactions of merchandise, is altogether suspended; and the consequence is, that the law of right is trampled into ashes. A tide of public odium runs against the men who are outraged of their property, and a smile of general connivance rewards the successful dexterity of the men who invade it. That portion of the annual produce of our soil, which, on a foundation of legitimacy as firm as the property of the soil itself, is allotted to a set of national functionaries—and which, but for them, would all have gone, in the shape of increased *revenue, to the* indolent proprietor,

is altogether thrown loose from the guardianship of that great principle of reciprocity, on which we strongly suspect that the honesties of this world are mainly supported. The national clergy of England may be considered as standing out of the pale of this guardianship; and the consequence is, that what is most rightfully and most sacredly theirs, is abandoned to the gambol of many thousand depredators; and, in addition to a load of most unmerited obloquy, have they had to sustain all the heartburnings of known and felt injustice; and that intercourse between the teachers and the taught, which ought surely to be an intercourse of peace, and friendship, and righteousness, is turned into a contest between the natural avarice of the one party, and the natural resentments of the other. It is not that we wish our sister church were swept away, for we honestly think, that the overthrow of that establishment would be a severe blow to the Christianity of our land. It is not that we envy that great hierarchy the splendor of her endowments—for better a dinner of herbs, when surrounded by the love of parishioners, than a preferment of stalled dignity, and strife therewith. It is not either that we look upon her ministers as having at all disgraced themselves by their rapacity; for look to the amount of the encroachments that are made upon them, and you will see that they have carried their privileges with the most exemplary forbearance and moderation. But from these very encroachments do we infer how lawless a human being will become, when emancipated from the bond of his own interest; how much such a state of things must multiply the temptations to injustice over the

face of the country; and how desirable, therefore, that it were put an end to—not by the abolition of that venerable church, but by a fair and liberal commutation of the revenues which support her—not by bringing any blight on the property of her ecclesiastics, but by the removal of a most devouring blight from the worth of her population—that every provocative to justice may be done away, and the frailty of human principle be no longer left to such a ruinous and such a withering exposure.

This instance we would not have mentioned, but for the sake of adding another experimental proof to the lesson of our text; and we now hasten onward to the lesson itself, with a few of its applications.

We trust you are convinced, from what has been said, that much of the actual honesty of the world is due to the selfishness of the world. And then you will surely admit, that, in as far as this is the actuating principle, honesty descends from its place as a rewardable, or even as an amiable virtue, and sinks down into the character of a mere prudential virtue—which, so far from conferring any moral exaltation on him by whom it is exemplified, emanates out of a propensity that seems inseparable from the constitution of every sentient being—and by which man is, in one point, assimilated either to the most worthless of his own species, or to those inferior animals among whom worth is unattainable.

And let it not deafen the humbling impression of this argument, that you are not distinctly conscious of the operation of selfishness, as presiding at every step over the honesty of your daily and familiar transactions; and that the only inward checks against

injustice, of which you are sensible, are the aversion of a generous indignancy towards it, and the positive discomfort you would incur by the reproaches of your own conscience. Selfishness, in fact, may have originated and alimented the whole of this virtue that belongs to you, and yet the mind incur the same discomfort by the violation of it, that it would do by the violation of any other of its established habits. And as to the generous indignancy of your feelings against all that is fraudulently and disgracefully wrong, let us never forget, that this may be the nurtured fruit of that common selfishness which links human beings with each other into a relationship of mutual dependence. This may be seen, in all its perfection, among the leagued and sworn banditti of the highway; who, while execrated by society at large for the compact of iniquity into which they have entered, can maintain the most heroic fidelity to the virtues of their own brotherhood—and be, in every way, as lofty and as chivalric with their points of honour, as we are with ours; and elevate as indignant a voice against the worthlessness of him who could betray the secret of their association, or break up any of the securities by which it was held together. And, in like manner, may we be the members of a wider combination, yet brought together by the tie of reciprocal interest; and all the virtues essential to the existence, or to the good of such a combination, may come to be idolized amongst us; and the breath of human applause may fan them into a lustre of splendid estimation; and yet the good man of society on earth be, in common with all his fellows, an utter outcast from the society of heaven—with

his heart altogether bereft of that allegiance to God which forms the reigning principle of his unfallen creation—and in a state of entire destitution either as to that love of the Supreme Being, or as to that disinterested love of those around us, which form the graces and the virtues of eternity.

We have not affirmed that there is no such thing as a native and disinterested principle of honour among men. But we have affirmed, on a former occasion, that a sense of honour may be in the heart, and the sense of God be utterly away from it. And we affirm now, that much of the honest practice of the world is not due to honesty of principle at all, but takes its origin from a baser ingredient of our constitution altogether. How wide is the operation of selfishness on the one hand, and how limited is the operation of abstract principle on the other, it were difficult to determine; and such a labyrinth to man is his own heart, that he may be utterly unable, from his own consciousness, to answer this question. But amid all the difficulties of such an analysis to himself, we ask him to think of another who is unseen by us, but who is represented to us as seeing all things.—We know not in what characters this heavenly witness can be more impressively set forth, than as pondering the heart, as weighing the secrets of the heart, as fastening an attentive and a judging eye on all the movements of it, as treasuring up the whole of man's outward and inward history in a book of remembrance; and as keeping it in reserve for that day when, it is said, that the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open; and God shall bring out every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Your consciousness may not distinctly inform you, in how far the integrity of your habits is due to the latent operation of selfishness, or to the more direct and obvious operation of honor. But your consciousness may, perhaps, inform you distinctly enough, how little a share the will of God has in the way of influence on any of your doings. Your own sense and memory of what passes within you may charge you with the truth of this monstrous indictment—that you live without God in the world; that however you may be signalized among your fellows, by that worth of character which is held in highest value and demand amongst the individuals of a mercantile society, it is at least without the influence of a godly principle that you have reached the maturity of an established reputation; that either the proud emotions of rectitude which glow within your bosom are totally untinctured by a feeling of homage to the Deity—or that, without any such emotions, Self is the divinity you have all along worshipped, and your very virtues are so many offerings of reverence at her shrine. If such be, in fact, the nakedness of your spiritual condition, is it not high time, we ask, that you awaken out of this delusion, and shake the lying spirit of deep and heavy slumber away from you? Is it not high time, when eternity is so fast coming on, that you examine your accounts with God, and seek for a settlement with that Being who will so soon meet your disembodied spirits with the question of—what have you done unto me?—And if all the virtues which adorn you are but the subserviences of time, and of its accommodations—if either done altogether unto yourselves, or done without the recog-

nition of God on the spontaneous instigation of your own feelings—is it not high time that you lean no longer to the securities on which you have rested, and that you seek for acceptance with your Maker on a more firm and unalterable foundation?

This, then, is the terminating object of all the experience that we have tried to set before you. We want it to be a schoolmaster to bring you unto Christ. We want you to open your eyes to the accordancy which obtains between the theology of the New-Testament and the actual state and history of man. Above all, we want you to turn your eyes inwardly upon yourselves, and there to behold a character without one trace or lineament of godliness—there to behold a heart set upon totally other things than those which constitute the portion and the reward of eternity—there to behold every principle of action resolvable into the idolatry of self, or, at least into something independent of the authority of God—there to behold how worthless in their substance are those virtues which look so imposing in their semblance and their display, and draw round them here a popularity and an applause which will all be dissipated into nothing, when hereafter they are brought up for examination to the judgment seat. We want you, when the revelation of the gospel charges you with the totality and magnitude of your corruption, that you acquiesce in that charge; and that you may perceive the trueness of it, under the disguise of all those hollow and unsubstantial accomplishments, with which nature may deck her own fallen and degenerate children. It is easy to be amused, and interested, and intellectually regaled, by an analysis of

the human character, and a survey of human society. But it is not so easy to reach the individual conscience with the lesson—we are undone. It is not so easy to strike the alarm into your hearts of the present guilt, and the future damnation. It is not so easy to send the pointed arrow of conviction into your bosoms, where it may keep by you and pursue you like an arrow sticking fast; or so to humble you into the conclusion, that in the sight of God, you are an accursed thing, as that you may seek unto him who became a curse for you, and as that the preaching of his Cross might cease to be foolishness.

Be assured, then, if you keep by the ground of being justified by your present works, you will perish: and though we may not have succeeded in convincing you of their worthlessness, be assured, that a day is coming when such a flaw of deceitfulness, in the principle of them all, shall be laid open, as will demonstrate the equity of your entire and everlasting condemnation. To avert the fearfulness of that day is the message of the great atonement sounded in your ears—and the blood of Christ, cleansing from all sin, is offered to your acceptance; and if you turn away from it, you add to the guilt of a broken law the insult of a neglected gospel. But if you take the pardon of the gospel on the footing of the gospel, then, such is the efficacy of this great expedient, that it will reach an application of mercy farther than the eye of your own conscience ever reached; that it will redeem you from the guilt even of your most secret and unsuspected iniquities; and thoroughly wash you from a taint of sinfulness, more

inveterate than, in the blindness of n
thought of, or ever conceived to belong to

But when a man becomes a believer, there are great events which take place at this great turning point in his history. One of them takes place in heaven—even the expunging of his name from the book of condemnation. Another of them takes place on earth—even the application of such a sanctifying influence to his person, that all old things are done away with him, and all things become new with him. He is made the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He is not merely forgiven the sin of every one evil work of which he had aforetime been guilty, but he is created anew unto the corresponding good work. And therefore, if a Christian, will his honesty be purified from that taint of selfishness by which the general honesty of this world is so deeply and extensively pervaded. He will not do this good thing, that any good thing may be done unto him again. He will do it on a simple regard to its own native and independent rectitude. He will do it because it is honorable, and because God wills him so to adorn the doctrine of his Saviour. All his fair dealing, and all his friendship, will be fair dealing and friendship without interest. The principle that is in him will stand in no need of aid from any such auxiliary—but strong in its own unborrowed resources, will it impress a legible stamp of dignity and uprightness on the whole variety of his transactions in the world. All men find it their advantage, by the integrity of their dealings, to prolong the existence of some gainful fellowship into which they may have entered. But with him, the same unsullied

the human [illegible] fellowship together, and
But i[illegible] of it, will abide with him
[illegible] actions, and dignify its full and
[illegible] Most men find, that, without the
[illegible] any mischief on their own heads,
the, [illegible] duce beneath the point of absolute justice, the charges of taxation. But he has a conscience both towards God, and towards man, which will not let him; and there is a rigid truth in all his returns, a pointed and precise accuracy in all his payments. When hemmed in with circumstances of difficulty, and evidently tottering to his fall, the demand of nature is, that he should ply his every artifice to secrete a provision for his family. But a Christian mind is incapable of artifice; and the voice of conscience within him will ever be louder than the voice of necessity; and he will be open as day with his creditors, nor put forth his hand to that which is rightfully theirs, any more than he would put forth his hand to the perpetration of a sacrilege; and though released altogether from that tie of interest which binds a man to equity with his fellows, yet the tie of principle will remain with him in all its strength. Nor will it ever be found that he, for the sake of subsistence, will enter into fraud, seeing that, as one of the children of light, he would not, to gain the whole world, lose his own soul.

DISCOURSE IV.

THE GUILT OF DISHONESTY NOT TO BE ESTIMATED BY THE GAIN OF IT.

LUKE xvi, 10.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

It is the fine poetical conception of a late poetical countryman, whose fancy too often grovelled among the despicable of human character—but who, at the same time, was capable of exhibiting, either in pleasing or in proud array, both the tender and the noble of human character—when he says of the man who carried a native unborrowed self-sustained rectitude in his bosom, that "his eye, even turned on empty space, beamed keen with honor." It was affirmed, in the last discourse, that much of the honorable practice of the world rested on the substratum of selfishness; that society was held together in the exercise of its relative virtues, mainly, by the tie of reciprocal advantage; that a man's own interest bound him to all those average equities which obtained in the neighbourhood around him; and in which, if he proved himself to be glaringly deficient, he would be abandoned by the respect, and the confidence, and the good will, of the people with whom he

had to do. It is a melancholy thought, how little the semblance of virtue upon earth betokens the real and substantial presence of virtuous principle among men. But on the other hand, though it be a rare, there cannot be a more dignified attitude of the soul, than when of itself it kindles with a sense of justice, and the holy flame is fed, as it were, by its own energies; than when man moves onwards in an unchanging course of moral magnanimity, and disdains the aid of those inferior principles, by which gross and sordid humanity, is kept from all the grosser violations; than when he rejoices in truth as his kindred and congenial element;—so, that though unpeopled of all its terrestrial accompaniments; though he saw no interest whatever to be associated with its fulfilment; though without one prospect either of fame or of emolument before him, would his eye, even when turned on emptiness itself, still retain the living lustre that had been lighted up in it, by a feeling of inward and independent reverence.

It has already been observed, and that fully, and frequently enough, that a great part of the homage which is rendered to integrity in the world, is due to the operation of selfishness. And this substantially is the reason, why the principle of the text has so very slender a hold upon the human conscience. Man is ever prone to estimate the enormity of injustice, by the degree in which he suffers from it. He brings this moral question to the standard of his own interest. A master will bear with all the lesser liberties of his servants, so long as he feels them to be harmless; and it is not till he is awakened to the apprehension of personal injury from the amount or

frequency of the embezzlements, that his moral indignation is at all sensibly awakened. And thus it is, that the maxim of our great teacher of righteousness seems to be very much unfelt, or forgotten, in society. Unfaithfulness in that which is little, and unfaithfulness in that which is much, are very far from being regarded, as they were by him under the same aspect of criminality. If there be no great hurt, it is felt that there is no great harm. The innocence of a dishonest freedom in respect of morality, is rated by its insignificance in respect of matter. The margin which separates the right from the wrong is remorselessly trodden under foot, so long as each makes only a minute and gentle encroachment beyond the landmark of his neighbour's territory. On this subject there is a loose and popular estimate, which is not at one with the deliverance of the New Testament; a habit of petty invasion on the side of aggressors, which is scarcely felt by them to be at all iniquitous —and even on the part of those who are thus made free with there is a habit of loose and careless toleration. There is, in fact, a negligence or a dormancy of principle among men, which causes this sort of injustice to be easily practised on the one side, and as easily put up with on the other; and, in a general slackness of observation, is this virtue, in its strictness and in its delicacy, completely overborne.

It is the taint of selfishness, then, which has so marred and corrupted the moral sensibility of our world; and the man, if such a man can be, whose "eye, even turned on empty space, beams keen with honour;" and whose homage, therefore, to the virtue of justice, is altogether freed from the mixture

of unworthy and interested feelings, will long to render to her, in every instance, a faultless and a completed offering. Whatever his forbearance to others, he could not suffer the slightest blot of corruption upon any doings of his own. He cannot be satisfied with any thing short of the very last jot and tittle of the requirements of equity being fulfilled. He not merely shares in the revolt of the general world against such outrageous departures from the rule of right, as would carry in their train the ruin of acquaintances or the distress of families. Such is the delicacy of the principle within him, that he could not have peace under the consciousness even of the minutest and least discoverable violation. He looks fully and fearlessly at the whole account which justice has against him; and he cannot rest, so long as there is a single article unmet, or a single demand unsatisfied. If, in any transaction of his there was so much as a farthing of secret and injurious reservation on his side, this would be to him like an accursed thing, which marred the character of the whole proceeding, and spread over it such an aspect of evil, as to offend and to disturb him. He could not bear the whisperings of his own heart, if it told him, that, in so much as by one iota of defect, he had balanced the matter unfairly between himself and the unconscious individual with whom he deals. It would lie a burden upon his mind to hurt and to make him unhappy, till the opportunity of explanation had come round, and he had obtained ease to his conscience, by acquitting himself to the full of all his obligations. It is justice in the uprightness of her attitude; it is justice in the onwardness of her

path; it is justice disdaining every advantage that would tempt her, by ever so little to the right or to the left; it is justice spurning the littleness of each paltry enticement away from her, and maintaining herself, without deviation, in a track so purely rectilineal, that even the most jealous and microscopic eye could not find in it the slightest aberration: this is the justice set forth by our great moral Teacher in the passage now submitted to you; and by which we are told, that this virtue refuses fellowship with every degree of iniquity that is perceptible; and that, were the very least act of unfaithfulness admitted, she would feel as if in her sanctity she had been violated, as if in her character she had sustained an overthrow.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, let us first attempt to elucidate the principle of our text, and then urge onward to its practical consequences —both as it respects our general relation to God, and as it respects the particular lesson of faithfulness that may be educed from it.

I. The great principle of the text is, that he who has sinned though to a small amount in respect of the fruit of his transgression—provided he has done so, by passing over a forbidden limit which was distinctly known to him, has in the act of doing so, incurred a full condemnation in respect of the principle of his transgression. In one word, that the gain of it may be small, while the guilt of it may be great; that the latter ought not to be measured by the former; but that he who is unfaithful in the least, shall be dealt with, in respect of the offence he has given to God, in the same way as if he had been unfaithful in much.

The first reason, which we would assign in vindication of this is, that by a small act of injustice, the line which separates the right from the wrong is just as effectually broken over as by a great act of injustice. There is a tendency in gross and corporeal man to rate the criminality of injustice by the amount of its appropriations—to reduce it to a computation of weight and of measure—to count the man who has gained a double sum by his dishonesty, to be doubly more dishonest than his neighbor—to make it an affair of product rather than of principle; and thus to weigh the morality of a character in the same arithmetical balance with number or with magnitude. Now, this is not the rule of calculation on which our Saviour has proceeded in the text. He speaks to the man who is only half an inch within the limit of forbidden ground, in the very same terms by which he addresses the man who has made the furthest and the largest incursions upon it. It is true, that he is only a little way upon the wrong side of the line of demarcation. But why is he upon it at all? It was in the act of crossing that line, and not in the act of going onwards after he had crossed it—it was then that the contest between right and wrong was entered upon, and then it was decided. That was the instant of time at which principle struck her surrender. The great pull which the man had to make, was in the act of overleaping the fence of separation; and after that was done, justice had no other barrier by which to obstruct his progress over the whole extent of the field which she had interdicted. There might be barriers of a different description. There might

be still a revolting of humanity against the sufferings that would be inflicted by an act of larger fraud or depredation. There might be a dread of exposure, if the dishonesty should so swell, in point of amount, as to become more noticeable. There might, after the absolute limit between justice and injustice is broken, be another limit against the extending of a man's encroachments, in a terror of discovery, or in a sense of interest, or even in the relentings of a kindly or a compunctious feeling towards him who is the victim of injustice. But this is not the limit with which the question of a man's truth, or a man's honesty, has to do. These have already been given up. He may only be a little way within the margin of the unlawful territory, but still he is upon it; and the God who finds him there will reckon with him, and deal with him accordingly. Other principles and other considerations, may restrain his progress to the very heart of the territory, but justice is not one of them. This he deliberately flung away from him, at that moment when he passed the line of circumvallation; and, though in the neighborhood of that line, he may hover all his days at the petty work of picking and purloining such fragments as he meets with, though he may never venture himself to a place of more daring or distinguished atrocity, God sees of him, that, in respect of the principle of justice, at least, there is an utter unhingement. And thus it is that the Saviour, who knew what was in man, and who, therefore, knew all the springs of that moral machinery by which he is actuated, pronounces of him who was unfaithful in the least, that he was unfaithful also in much.

After the transition is accomplished, the progress will follow of course, just as opportunity invites, and just as circumstances make it safe and practicable. For it is not with justice as it is with generosity, and some of the other virtues. There is not the same graduation in the former as there is in the latter. The man who, other circumstances being equal, gives away a double sum in charity, may, with more propriety, be reckoned doubly more generous than his neighbour; than the man who, with the same equality of circumstances, only ventures on half the extent of fraudulency, can be reckoned only one half as unjust as his neighbour. Each has broken a clear line of demarcation. Each has transgressed a distinct and visible limit which he knew to be forbidden. Each has knowingly forced a passage beyond his neighbour's land-mark—and that is the place where justice has laid the main force of her interdict. As it respects the *materiel* of injustice, the question revolves itself into a mere computation of quantity. As it respects the *morale* of injustice, the computation is upon other principles. It is upon the latter that our Saviour pronounces himself. And he gives us to understand, that a very humble degree of the former may indicate the latter in all its atrocity. He stands on the breach between the lawful and the unlawful; and he tells us, that the man who enters by a single footstep on the forbidden ground, immediately gathers upon his person the full hue and character of guiltiness. He admits no extenuation of the lesser acts of dishonesty. He does not make right pass into wrong, by a gradual melting of the one into the other. He does not thus obliterate the

distinctions of morality. There is no shading off at the margin of guilt, but a clear and vigorous delineation. It is not by a gentle transition that a man steps over from honesty to dishonesty. There is between them a wall rising up unto heaven; and the high authority of heaven must be stormed ere one inch of entrance can be made into the region of iniquity. The morality of the Saviour never leads him to gloss over the beginnings of crime. His object ever is, as in the text before us, to fortify the limit, to cast a rampart of exclusion around the whole territory of guilt, and to rear it before the eye of man in such characters of strength and sacredness, as should make them feel that it is impregnable.

The second reason, why he who is unfaithful in the least has incurred the condemnation of him who is unfaithful in much, is, that the littleness of the gain, so far from giving a littleness to the guilt, is in fact a circumstance of aggravation. There is just this difference. He who has committed injustice for the sake of a less advantage, has done it on the impulse of a less temptation. He has parted with his honesty at an inferior price; and this circumstance may go so to equalize the estimate, as to bring it very much to one with the deliverance, in the text, of our great Teacher of righteousness. The limitation between good and evil stood as distinctly before the notice of the small as of the great depredator; and he has just made as direct a contravention to the first reason, when he passed over upon the wrong side of it. And he may have made little of gain by the enterprise, but this does not allay the guilt of it. Nay, by the second reason, this may serve to aggravate the wrath

of the Divinity against him. It proves how small the price is which he sets upon his eternity, and how cheaply he can bargain the favour of God away from him, and how low he rates the good of an inheritance with him, and for what a trifle he can dispose of all interest in his kingdom and in his promises. The very circumstance which gives to his character a milder transgression in the eyes of the world, makes it more odious in the judgment of the sanctuary. The more paltry it is in respect of profit, the more profane it may be in respect of principle. It likens him the more to profane Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. And thus it is, indeed, most woful to think of such a senseless and alienated world; and how heedlessly the men of it are posting their infatuated way to destruction; and how, for as little gain as might serve them a day, they are contracting as much guilt as will ruin them for ever; and are profoundly asleep in the midst of such designs and such doings, as will form the valid materials of their entire and everlasting condemnation.

It is with argument such as this that we would try to strike conviction among a very numerous class of offenders in society—those who, in the various departments of trust, or service, or agency, are ever practising, in littles, at the work of secret appropriation—those whose hands are in a state of constant defilement, by the putting of them forth to that which they ought to touch not, and taste not, and handle not—those who silently number such pilferments as can pass unnoticed among the perquisites of their office; and who, by an excess in their charges, just so slight as to escape detection—or by a habit of

purloining, just so restrained as to elude discovery, have both a conscience very much at ease in their own bosoms, and a credit very fair, and very entire, among their acquaintances around them. They grossly count upon the smallness of their transgression. But they are just going in a small way to hell. They would recoil with violent dislike from the act of a midnight depredator. It is just because terrors, and trials, and executions, have thrown around it the pomp and the circumstance of guilt. But at another bar, and on a day of more dreadful solemnity, their guilt will be made to stand out in its essential characters, and their condemnation will be pronounced from the lips of Him who judgeth righteously. They feel that they have incurred no outrageous forfeiture of character among men, and this instills a treacherous complacency into their own hearts. But the piercing eye of Him who looketh down from heaven is upon the reality of the question; and He who ponders the secrets of every bosom, can perceive, that the man who recoils only from such a degree of injustice as is notorious, may have no justice whatever in his character. He may have a sense of reputation. He may have the fear of detection and disgrace. He may feel a revolt in his constitution against the magnitude of a gross and glaring violation. He may even share in all the feelings and principles of that conventional kind of morality which obtains in his neighbourhood. But, of that principle which is surrendered by the least act of unfaithfulness, he has no share whatever. He perceives no overawing sacredness in that boundary which separates the right from the wrong. If he only keep decently

near, it is a matter of indifference to him whether he be on this or on that side of it. He can be unfaithful in that which is least. There may be other principles, and other considerations to restrain him; but certain it is, that it is not now the principle of justice which restrains him from being unfaithful in much.—This is given up; and, through a blindness to the great and important principle of our text, this virtue may, in its essential character, be as good as banished from the world. All its protections may be utterly overthrown. The line of defence is effaced by which it ought to have been firmly and scrupulously guarded. The sign-posts of intimation, which ought to warn and to scare away, are planted along the barrier; and when, in defiance to them, the barrier is broken, man will not be checked by any sense of honesty, at least, from expatiating over the whole of the forbidden territory. And thus may we gather from the countless peccadilloes which are so current in the various departments of trade, and service, and agency—from the secret freedoms in which many do indulge, without one remonstrance from their own hearts—from the petty inroads that are daily practised on the confines of justice, by which its line of demarcation is trodden under foot, and it has lost the moral distinctness, and the moral charm, that should have kept it unviolate—from the exceeding multitude of such offences as are frivolous in respect of the matter of them, but most fearfully important in respect of the principle in which they originate—from the woful amount of that unseen and unrecorded guilt which escapes the cognizance of human law, but, on the application of the touchstone

in our text, may be made to stand out in characters of severest condemnation—from instances, too numerous to repeat, but certainly too obvious to be missed, even by the observation of charity, may we gather the frailty of human principle, and the virulence of that moral poison, which is now in such full circulation to taint and to adulterate the character of our species.

Before finishing this branch of our subject, we may observe, that it is with this, as with many other phenomena of the human character, that we are not long in contemplation upon it, without coming in sight of that great characteristic of fallen man, which meets and forces itself upon us in every view that we take of him—even the great moral disease of ungodliness. It is at the precise limit between the right and the wrong that the flaming sword of God's law is placed. It is there that "Thus saith the Lord" presents itself, in legible characters, to our view. It is there where the operation of his commandment begins; and not at any of those higher gradations, where a man's dishonesty first appals himself by the chance of its detection, or appals others by the mischief and insecurity which it brings upon social life. An extensive fraud upon the revenue, for example, unpopular as this branch of justice is, would bring a man down from his place of eminence and credit in mercantile society. That petty fraud which is associated with so many of those smaller payments, where a lie in the written acknowledgment is both given and accepted, as a way of escape from the legal imposition, circulates at large among the members of the great trading community. In the former,

and in all the greater cases of injustice, there is a human restraint, and a human terror, in operation. There is disgrace and civil punishment to scare away. There are all the sanctions of that conventional morality which is suspended on the fear of man, and the opinion of man; and which, without so much as the recognition of a God, would naturally point its armor against every outrage that could sensibly disturb the securities and the rights of human society. But so long as the disturbance is not sensible—so long as the injustice keeps within the limits of smallness and secrecy—so long as it is safe for the individual to practise it, and, borne along on the tide of general example and connivance, he has nothing to restrain him but that distinct and inflexible word of God, which proscribes all unfaithfulness, and admits of it in no degrees, and no modifications—then, let the almost universal sleep of conscience attest, how little of God there is in the virtue of this world; and how much the peace and the protection of society are owing to such moralities, as the mere selfishness of man would lead him to ordain, even in a community of atheists.

II. Let us now attempt to unfold a few of the practical consequences that may be drawn from the principle of the text, both in respect to our general relation with God, and in respect to the particular lesson of faithfulness which may be educed from it.

1. There cannot be a stronger possible illustration of our argument, than the very first act of retribution that occurred in the history of our species. "And God said unto Adam, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in

the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. But the woman took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." What is it that invests the eating of a solitary apple with a grandeur so momentous? How came an action in itself so minute, to be the germe of such mighty consequences? How are we to understand that our first parents, by the doing of a single instant, not only brought death upon themselves, but shed this big and baleful disaster over all their posterity? We may not be able to answer all these questions, but we may at least learn, what a thing of danger it is, under the government of a holy and inflexible God, to tamper with the limits of obedience. By the eating of that apple a clear requirement was broken, and a distinct transition was made from loyalty to rebellion, and an entrance was effected into the region of sin—and thus did this one act serve like the opening of a gate for a torrent of mighty mischief; and, if the act itself was a trifle, it just went to aggravate its guilt—that, for such a trifle, the authority of God could be despised and trampled on. At all events, his attribute of Truth stood committed to the fulfilment of the threatening; and the very insignificancy of the deed, which provoked the execution of it, gives a sublimer character to the certainty of the fulfilment. We know how much this trait, in the dealings of God with man, has been the jeer of infidelity. But in all this ridicule, there is truly nothing else than the grossness of materialism. Had Adam, instead of plucking one single apple from the forbidden tree, been armed with the power of a malignant spirit, and spread a wanton havoc over the

face of paradise, and spoiled the garden of its loveliness, and been able to mar and to deform the whole of that terrestrial creation over which God had so recently rejoiced—the punishment he sustained would have looked, to these arithmetical moralists, a more adequate return for the offence of which he had been guilty. They cannot see how the moral lesson rises in greatness, just in proportion to the humility of the material accompaniments—and how it wraps a sublimer glory around the holiness of the Godhead—and how from the transaction, such as it is, the conclusion cometh forth more nakedly, and, therefore, more impressively, that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lawgiver. God said, "Let there be light, and it was light;" and it has ever been regarded as a sublime token of the Deity, that, from an utterance so simple, an accomplishment so quick and so magnificent should have followed. God said, "That he who eateth of the tree in the midst of the garden should die." It appears, indeed, but a little thing, that one should put forth his hand to an apple and taste of it. But a saying of God was involved in the matter—and heaven and earth must pass away, ere a saying of his can pass away; and so the apple became decisive of the fate of a world; and, out of the very scantiness of the occasion, did there emerge a sublimer display of truth and of holiness. The beginning of the world was, indeed, the period of great manifestations of the Godhead; and they all seem to accord, in style and character, with each other; and in that very history, which has called forth the profane and unthinking levity of many a scorner, may we behold as much of the

o rigorously and so inflexibly precise be the
of God's administration—if, under the economy
ven, sin, even in the very humblest of its exhi-
s, be the object of an intolerance so jealous and
relenting—if the Deity be such as this transac-
nanifests him to be, disdainful of fellowship even
the very least iniquity, and dreadful in the
nty of all his accomplishments against it—if,
single transgression, all the promise and all
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be still in the hands of that God who laid so
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that, however they may vanish from our own reme
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whose eye and whose memory never fail him. L
us transfer the lesson we have gotten of heave
jurisprudence from the case of our first parents to o
own case. Let us compare our lives with the law
God, and we shall find that our sins are past recko
ing. Let us take account of the habitual postu
of our souls, as a posture of dislike for the thin
that are above, and we shall find that our though
and our desires are ever running in one current
sinfulness. Let us just make the computation ho
often we fail in the bidden charity, and the bidd
godliness, and the bidden long suffering—all
clearly bidden as the duty that was laid on our fi
parents—and we shall find, that we are borne do
under a mountain of iniquity; that, in the langua
of the Psalmist, our transgressions have gone ov
our heads, and, as a heavy burden, are too heavy f
us; and if we be indeed under the government
Him who followed up the offence of the stolen app
by so dreadful a chastisement, then is wrath go
out unto the uttermost against every one of us.
There is something in the history of that apple wh
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those small sinners who practise in secret at t
work of their petty depredations. But it also ca
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that no sin is small. It serves a general purpose
conviction. It holds out a most alarming disclosu
of the charge that is against us; and makes it ma
fest to the conscience of him who is awakened the

by, that, unless God himself point out a way of escape, we are indeed most hopelessly sunk in condemnation. And, seeing that such wrath went out from the sanctuary of this unchangeable God, on the one offence of our first parents, it irresistibly follows, that if we, manifold in guilt, take not ourselves to his appointed way of reconciliation—if we refuse the overtures of Him, who then so visited the one offence through which all are dead, but is now laying before us all that free gift, which is of many offences unto justification—in other words, if we will not enter into peace through the offered Mediator, how much greater must be the wrath that abideth on us?

Now, let the sinner have his conscience schooled by such a contemplation, and there will be no rest whatever for his soul till he find it in the Saviour. Let him only learn, from the dealings of God with the first Adam, what a God of holiness he himself has to deal with; and let him further learn, from the history of the second Adam, that to manifest himself as a God of love, another righteousness had to be brought in, in place of that from which man had fallen so utterly away. There was a faultless obedience rendered by Him, of whom it is said, that he fulfilled all righteousness. There was a magnifying of the law by one in human form, who up to the last jot and tittle of it, acquitted himself of all its obligations. There was a pure, and lofty, and undefiled path, trodden by a holy and harmless Being, who gave not up his work upon earth, till ere he left it, he could cry out, that it was finished; and so had wrought out for us a perfect righteousness. Now, it forms the most prominent annunciation of the New

Testament, that the reward of this righteousness is offered unto all—so that there is not one of us who is not put by the gospel upon the alternative of being either tried by our own merits, or treated according to the merits of Him who became sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Let the sinner just look unto himself, and look unto the Saviour. Let him advert not to his one, but to his many offences; and that, too, in the sight of a God, who, but for one so slight and so insignificant in respect of the outward description, as the eating of a forbidden apple, threw off a world into banishment and entailed a sentence of death upon all its generations. Let him learn from this, that for sin, even in its humblest degrees, there exists in the bosom of the Godhead no toleration; and how shall he dare, with the degree and the frequency of his own sin, to stand any longer on a ground, where, if he remain, the fierceness of a consuming fire is so sure to overtake him? The righteousness of Christ is without a flaw, and there he is invited to take shelter. Under the actual regimen, which God has established in our world, it is indeed his only security—his refuge from the tempest, and hiding place from the storm. The only beloved Son offers to spread his own unspotted garment as a protection over him; and, if he be rightly alive to the utter nakedness of his moral and spiritual condition, he will indeed make no tarrying till he be found in Christ, and find that in him there is no condemnation.

Now, it is worthy of remark, that those principles, which shut a man up unto the faith, do not take

flight and abandon him, after they have served this temporary purpose. They abide with him, and work their appropriate influence on his character, and serve as the germe of a new moral creation; and we can afterwards detect their operation in his heart and life; so, that if they were present at the formation of a saving belief, they are not less unfailingly present with every true Christian, throughout the whole of his future history, as the elements of a renovated conduct. If it was sensibility to the evil of sin which helped to wean the man from himself, and led him to his Saviour, this sensibility does not fall asleep in the bosom of an awakened sinner, after Christ has given him light—but it grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength, of his Christianity. If, at the interesting period of his transition from nature to grace, he saw, even in the very least of his offences, a deadly provocation of the Lawgiver, he does not lose sight of this consideration in his future progress—nor does it barely remain with him, like one of the unproductive notions of an inert and unproductive theory. It gives rise to a fearful jealousy in his heart of the least appearance of evil; and, with every man who has undergone a genuine process of conversion, do we behold the scrupulous avoidance of sin, in its most slender, as well as in its more aggravated forms. If it was the perfection of the character of Christ, who felt that it became him to fulfil all righteousness, that offered him the first solid foundation on which he could lean —then, the same character, which first drew his eye for the purpose of confidence, still continues to draw his eye for the purpose of imitation. At the outset

340727

of faith, all the essential moralities of thought, and feeling, and conviction, are in play; nor is there any thing in the progress of a real faith which is calculated to throw them back again into the dormancy out of which they had arisen. They break out, in fact, into more full and flourishing display on every new creature, with every new step, and new evolution, in his mental history. All the principles of the gospel serve, as it were, to fan and to perpetuate his hostility against sin; and all the powers of the gospel enable him, more and more, to fulfil the desires of his heart, and to carry his purposes of hostility into execution. In the case of every genuine believer, who walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit, do we behold a fulfilling of the righteousness of the law—a strenuous avoidance of sin, in its slightest possible taint or modification—a strenuous performance of duty, up to the last jot and tittle of its exactions—so, that let the untrue professors of the faith do what they will in the way of antinomianism, and let the enemies of the faith say what they will about our antinomianism, the real spirit of the dispensation under which we live is such, that whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, is accounted the least—whosoever shall do and teach them is accounted the greatest.

2. Let us, therefore, urge the spirit and the practice of this lesson upon your observation. The place for the practice of it is the familiar and week-day scene. The principle for the spirit of it descends upon the heart, from the sublimest heights of the sanctuary of God. It is not vulgarizing Christianity

to bring it down to the very humblest occupations of human life. It is, in fact, dignifying human life, by bringing it up to the level of Christianity. It may look to some a degradation of the pulpit, when the household servant is told to make her firm stand against the temptation of open doors, and secret opportunities; or when the confidential agent is told to resist the slightest inclination to any unseen freedom with the property of his employers, or to any undiscoverable excess in the charges of his management; or when the receiver of a humble payment is told, that the tribute which is due on every written acknowledgment ought faithfully to be met, and not fictitiously to be evaded. This is not robbing religion of its sacredness, but spreading its sacredness over the face of society. It is evangelizing human life, by impregnating its minutest transactions with the spirit of the gospel. It is strengthening the wall of partition between sin and obedience. It is the Teacher of righteousness taking his stand at the outpost of that territory which he is appointed to defend, and warning his hearers of the danger that lies in a single footstep of encroachment. It is letting them know, that it is in the act of stepping over the limit, that the sinner throws the gauntlet of his defiance against the authority of God. And though he may deceive himself with the imagination that his soul is safe, because the gain of his injustice is small, such is the God with whom he has to do, that, if it be gain to the value of a single apple, then, within the compass of so small an outward dimension, may as much guilt be enclosed as that which hath brought

death into our world, and carried it down in a descending ruin upon all its generations.

It may appear a very little thing, when you are told to be honest in little matters; when the servant is told to keep her hand from every one article about which there is not an express or understood allowance on the part of her superiors; when the dealer is told to lop off the excesses of that minuter fraudulency, which is so currently practised in the humble walks of merchandise; when the workman is told to abstain from those petty reservations of the material of his work, for which he is said to have such snug and ample opportunity; and when, without pronouncing on the actual extent of these transgressions, all are told to be faithful in that which is least, else, if there be truth in our text, they incur the guilt of being unfaithful in much. It may be thought, that because such dishonesties as these are scarcely noticeable, they are therefore not worthy of notice. But it is just in the proportion of their being unnoticeable by the human eye, that it is religious to refrain from them. These are the cases in which it will be seen, whether the control of the omniscience of God makes up for the control of human observation—in which the sentiment, that thou God seest me, should carry a preponderance through all the secret places of a man's history—in which, when every earthly check of an earthly morality is withdrawn, it should be felt, that the eye of God is upon him, and that the judgment of God is in reserve for him. To him who is gifted with a true discernment of these matters, will it appear, that often, in proportion to the smallness of the doings, is the sacredness of that principle which

causes them to be done with integrity; that honesty, in little transactions, bears upon it more of the aspect of holiness, than honesty in great ones; that the man of deepest sensibility to the obligations of the law, is he who feels the quickening of moral alarm at its slightest violations; that, in the morality of grains and of scruples, there may be a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more heaven-born sanctity, than in that larger morality which flashes broadly and observably upon the world;—and that thus, in the faithfulness of the household maid, or of the apprentice boy, there may be the presence of a truer principle, than there is in the more conspicuous transactions of human business—what they do, being done, not with eye-service—what they do, being done unto the Lord.

And here we may remark, that nobleness of condition is not essential as a school for nobleness of character; nor does man require to be high in office, ere he can gather around his person the worth and the lustre of a high-minded integrity. It is delightful to think, that humble life may be just as rich in moral grace, and moral grandeur, as the loftier places of society; that as true a dignity of principle may be earned by him who in homeliest drudgery, plies his conscientious task, as by him who stands entrusted with the fortunes of an empire; that the poorest menial in the land, who can lift a hand unsoiled by the pilferments that are within his reach, may have achieved a victory over temptation, to the full as honourable as the proudest patriot can boast, who has spurned the bribery of courts away from him. It is cheering to know, from the heavenly judge him-

self, that he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much; and that thus, among the labors of the field and of the work-shop, it is possible for the peasant to be as bright in honour as the peer, and have the chivalry of as much truth and virtue to adorn him.

And, as this lesson is not little in respect of principle, so neither is it little in respect of influence on the order and well-being of human society. He who is unjust in the least, is, in respect of guilt, unjust also in much. And to reverse this proposition, as it is done in the first clause of our text—he who is faithful in that which is least, is, in respect both of righteous principle and of actual observation, faithful also in much. Who is the man to whom I would most readily confide the whole of my property? He who would most disdain to put forth an injurious hand on a single farthing of it. Who is the man from whom I would have the least dread of any unrighteous encroachment? He, all the delicacies of whose principle are awakened, when he comes within sight of the limit which separates the region of justice from the region of injustice. Who is the man whom we shall never find among the greater degrees of iniquity? He who shrinks with sacred abhorrence from the lesser degrees of it. It is a true, though a homely maxim of economy, that if we take care of our small sums, our great sums will take care of themselves. And, to pass from our own things to the things of others, it is no less true, that if principle should lead us all to maintain the care of strictest honesty over our neighbour's pennies, then will his pounds lie secure from the grasp of injustice, behind the barrier of a moral impossibility. This lesson, if

carried into effect among you, would so strengthen all the ramparts of security between man and man, as to make them utterly impassable; and therefore, while, in the matter of it, it may look, in one view, as one of the least of the commandments, it, in regard both of principle and of effect, is, in another view of it, one of the greatest of the commandments. And we therefore conclude with assuring you, that nothing will spread the principle of this commandment to any great extent throughout the mass of society, but the principle of godliness. Nothing will secure the general observation of justice amongst us, in its punctuality and in its preciseness, but such a precise Christianity as many affirm to be puritanical. In other words, the virtues of society, to be kept in a healthful and prosperous condition, must be upheld by the virtues of the sanctuary. Human law may restrain many of the grosser violations. But without religion among the people, justice will never be in extensive operation as a moral principle. A vast proportion of the species will be as unjust as the vigilance and the severities of law allow them to be. A thousand petty dishonesties, which never will, and never can be brought within the cognizance of any of our courts of administration, will still continue to derange the business of human life, and to stir up all the heartburnings of suspicion and resentment among the members of human society. And it is, indeed, a triumphant reversion awaiting the Christianity of the New Testament, when it shall become manifest as day, that it is her doctrine alone, which, by its searching and sanctifying influence,

and demoralize our world—as that each may be secure in the lap of his neighbour's integrity, the charm of confidence, between man and man, at length be felt in the business of every town, in the bosom of every family.

DISCOURSE V.

ON THE GREAT CHRISTIAN LAW OF RECIPROCITY BETWEEN MAN AND MAN.

MATTHEW vii, 12.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

THERE are two great classes in human society, between whom there lie certain mutual claims and obligations, which are felt by some to be of very difficult adjustment. There are those who have requests of some kind or other to make; and there are those to whom the requests are made, and with whom there is lodged the power either to grant or to refuse them. Now, at first sight, it would appear, that the firm exercise of this power of refusal is the only barrier by which the latter class can be secured against the indefinite encroachments of the former; and that, if this were removed, all the safeguards of right and property would be removed along with it. The power of refusal, on the part of those who have the right of refusal, may be abolished by an act of violence, on the part of those who have it not; and then, when this happens in individual cases, we have the crimes of assault and robbery; and when it happens on a more extended scale, we have anarchy and insur-

rection in the land. Or the power of refusal m
be taken away by an authoritative precept of r
gion; and then might it still be matter of appreh
sion, lest our only defence against the inroads
selfishness and injustice were as good as given
and lest the peace and interest of families should
laid open to a most fearful exposure, by the ena
ments of a romantic and impracticable syst
Whenever this is apprehended, the temptation
strongly felt, either to rid ourselves of the ena
ments altogether, or at least to bring them down
nearer accommodation to the feelings and the e
veniences of men.

And Christianity, on the very first blush of
appears to be precisely such a religion. It seem
take away all lawfulness of resistance from the p
sessor, and to invest the demander with such an
tent of privilege, as would make the two classes
society, to which we have just now adverted, speed
change places. And this is the true secret of
many laborious deviations that have been attempt
in this branch of morality, on the obvious mean
of the New Testament. This is the secret of th
many qualifying clauses, by which its most lumin
announcements have been beset, to the utter dark
ing of them. This it is which explains the m
sad invasions that have been made on the most m
fest and undeniable literalities of the law and of
testimony. And our present text, among others,
received its full share of mutilation, and of what m
be called "dressing up," from the hands of comm
tators—it having wakened the very alarms of whi
we have just spoken, and called forth the very

tempts to quiet and to subdue them. Surely, it has been said, we can never be required to do unto others what they have no right, and no reason, to expect from us. The demand must not be an extravagant one. It must lie within the limits of moderation. It must be such as, in the estimation of every justly thinking person, is counted fair in the circumstances of the case. The principle on which our Saviour, in the text, rests the obligation of doing any particular thing to others, is, that we wish others to do that thing unto us. But this is too much for an affrighted selfishness; and, for her own protection, she would put forth a defensive sophistry upon the subject; and in place of that distinctly announced principle, on which the Bible both directs and specifies what the things are which we should do unto others, does she substitute another principle entirely —which is, merely to do unto others such things as are fair, and right, and reasonable.

Now, there is one clause of this verse which would appear to lay a positive interdict on all these qualifications. How shall we dispose of a phrase, so sweeping and universal in its import, as that of "all things whatsoever?" We cannot think that such an expression as this was inserted for nothing, by him who has told us, that "cursed is every one who taketh away from the words of this book." There is no distinction laid down between things fair, and things unfair—between things reasonable, and things unreasonable. Both are comprehended in the "all things whatsoever." The signification is plain and absolute, that, let the thing be what it may, if you wish

others to do that thing for you, it lies imperatively upon you to do the very same thing for them also.

But, at this rate, you may think that the whole system of human intercourse would go into unhingement. You may wish your next-door neighbour to present you with half his fortune. In this case, we know not how you are to escape from the conclusion, that you are bound to present him with the half of yours. Or you may wish a relative to burden himself with the expenses of all your family. It is then impossible to save you from the positive obligation, if you are equally able for it, of doing the same service to the family of another. Or you may wish to engross the whole time of an acquaintance in personal attendance upon yourself. Then, it is just your part to do the same extent of civility to another who may desire it. These are only a few specifications, out of the manifold varieties, whether of service or of donation, which are conceivable between one man and another; nor are we aware of any artifice of explanation by which they can possibly be detached from the "all things whatsoever" of the verse before us. These are the literalities which we are not at liberty to compromise—but are bound to urge, and that simply, according to the terms in which they have been conveyed to us by the great Teacher of righteousness. This may raise a sensitive dread in many a bosom. It may look like the opening of a floodgate, through which a torrent of human rapacity would be made to set in on the fair and measured domains of property, and by which all the fences of legality would be overthrown. It is some such fear-

ful anticipation as this which causes casuistry to ply its wily expedients, and busily to devise its many limits, and its many exceptions, to the morality of the New Testament. And yet, we think it possible to demonstrate of our text, that no such modifying is requisite; and that, though admitted strictly and rigorously as the rule of our daily conduct, it would lead to no practical conclusions which are at all formidable.

For, what is the precise circumstance which lays the obligation of this precept upon you? There may be other places in the Bible where you are required to do things for the benefit of your neighbour, whether you would wish your neighbour to do these things for your benefit or not. But this is not the requirement here. There is none other thing laid upon you in this place, than that you should do that good action in behalf of another, which you would like that other to do in behalf of yourself. If you would not like him to do it for you, then there is nothing in the compass of this sentence now before you, that at all obligates you to do it for him. If you would not like your neighbour to make so romantic a surrender to your interest, as to offer you to the extent of half his fortune, then there is nothing in that part of the gospel code which now engages us, that renders it imperative upon you to make the same offer to your neighbour. If you would positively recoil, in all the reluctance of ingenuous delicacy, from the selfishness of laying on a relation the burden of the expenses of all your family, then this is not the good office that you would have him to do unto you; and this, therefore, is not the good office

which the text prescribes you to do unto him. If you have such consideration for another's ease, and another's convenience, that you could not take the ungenerous advantage of so much of his time for your accommodation, there may be other verses in the Bible which point to a greater sacrifice, on your part, for the good of others, than you would like these others to make for yours; but, most assuredly, this is not the verse which imposes that sacrifice. If you would not that others should do these things on your account, then these things form no part of the "all things whatsoever" you would that men should do unto you; and, therefore, they form no part of the "all things whatsoever" that you are required, by this verse, to do unto them. The bare circumstance of your positively not wishing that any such services should be rendered unto you, exempts you, as far as the single authority of this precept is concerned, from the obligation of rendering these services to others. This is the limitation to the extent of those services which are called for in the text; and it is surely better, that every limitation to a commandment of God's, should be defined by God himself, than that it should be drawn from the assumptions of human fancy, or from the fears and the feelings of human convenience.

Let a man, in fact, give himself up to a strict and literal observation of the precept in this verse, and it will impress a two-fold direction upon him. It will not only guide him to certain performances of good in behalf of others, but it will guide him to the regulation of his own desires of good from them. For his desires of good from others are here set up as the

measure of his performances of good to others. The more selfish and unbounded his desires are, the larger are those performances with the obligation of which he is burdened. Whatsoever he would that others should do unto him, he is bound to do unto them; and, therefore, the more he gives way to ungenerous and extravagant wishes of service from those who are around him, the heavier and more insupportable is the load of duty which he brings upon himself.—The commandment is quite imperative, and there is no escaping from it; and if he, by the excess of his selfishness, should render it impracticable, then the whole punishment, due to the guilt of casting aside the authority of this commandment, follows in that train of punishment which is annexed to selfishness. There is one way of being relieved from such a burden. There is one way of reducing this verse to a moderate and practicable requirement; and that is, just to give up selfishness—just to stifle all ungenerous desires—just to moderate every wish of service or liberality from others, down to the standard of what is right and equitable; and then there may be other verses in the Bible by which we are called to be kind even to the evil and the unthankful. But, most assuredly, this verse lays upon us none other thing, than that we should do such services for others as are right and equitable.

The more extravagant, then, a man's wishes of accommodation from others are, the wider is the distance between him and the bidden performances of our text. The separation of him from his duty increases at the rate of two bodies receding from each other by equal and contrary movements. The more

selfish his desires of service are from others, the more feeble, on that very account, will be his desires of making any surrender of himself to them, and yet the greater is the amount of that surrender which is due. The poor man, in fact, is moving himself away from the rule; and the rule is just moving as fast away from the man. As he sinks, in the scale of selfishness, beneath the point of a fair and moderate expectation from others, does the rule rise, in the scale of duty, with its demands upon him; and thus there is rendered to him double for every unfair and ungenerous imposition that he would make on the kindness of those who are around him.

Now, there is one way, and a very effectual one, of getting these two ends to meet. Moderate your own desires of service from others, and you will moderate, in the same degree, all those duties of service to others which are measured by these desires. Have the delicacy to abstain from any wish of encroachment on the convenience or property of another. Have the highmindedness to be indebted for your own support to the exertions of your own honourable industry, rather than to the dastardly habit of preying on the simplicity of those around you.—Have such a keen sense of equity, and such a fine tone of independent feeling, that you could not bear to be the cause of hardship or distress to a single human creature, if you could help it. Let the same spirit be in you, which the Apostle wanted to exemplify before the eye of his disciples, when he coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel; when he laboured not to be chargeable to any of them; but wrought with his own hands, rather than be burdensome.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in the Apostle of the Gentiles; and then, the text before us will not come near you with a single oppressive or impracticable requirement. There may be other passages, where you are called to go beyond the strict line of justice, or common humanity, in behalf of your suffering brethren. But this passage does not touch you with any such perceptive imposition: and you, by moderating your wishes from others down to what is fair and equitable, do, in fact, reduce the rule which binds you to act according to the measure of these wishes, down to a rule of precise and undeviating equity.

The operation is somewhat like that of a governor, or fly, in mechanism. This is a very happy contrivance, by which all that is defective or excessive in the motion, is confined within the limits of equability; and every tendency, in particular, to any mischievous acceleration, is restrained. The impulse given by this verse to the conduct of man among his fellows, would seem, to a superficial observer, to carry him to all the excesses of a most ruinous and quixotic benevolence. But let him only look to the skilful adaptation of the fly. Just suppose the control of moderation and equity to be laid upon his own wishes, and there is not a single impulse, given to his conduct beyond the rate of moderation and equity. You are not required here to do all things whatsoever in behalf of others, but to do all things whatsoever for them, that you would should be done unto yourself. This is the check by which the whole of the bidden movement is governed, and kept from running out into any hurtful excess. And such is the beautiful

operation of that piece of moral mechanism that we are now employed in contemplating, that while it keeps down all the aspirations of selfishness, it does, in fact, restrain every extravagancy, and impress on its obedient subjects no other movement, than that of an even and inflexible justice.

This rule of our Saviour's, then, prescribes moderation to our desires of good from others, as well as generosity to our doings in behalf of others; and makes the first the measure of obligation to the second. It may thus be seen how easily, in a Christian society, the whole work of benevolence could be adjusted, so as to render it possible for the givers not only to meet, but also to overpass, the wishes and expectations of the receivers. The rich man may have a heavier obligation laid upon him by other precepts of the New-Testament; but, by this precept, he is not bound to do more for the poor man, than what he himself would wish, in like circumstances, to be done for him. And let the poor man, on the other hand, wish for no more than what a Christian ought to wish for; let him work and endure to the extent of nature's sufferance, rather than beg—and only beg, rather than that he should starve; and in such a state of principle among men, a tide of beneficence would so go forth upon all the vacant places in society, as that there should be no room to receive it. The duty of the rich, as connected with this administration, is of so direct and positive a character, as to obtrude itself at once on the notice of the Christian moralist. But the poor also have a duty in it—to which we feel ourselves directed by the train of argument which we have now

been prosecuting—and a duty, too, we think, of far greater importance even than the other, to the best interests of mankind.

For, let us first contrast the rich man who is ungenerous in his doings, with the poor man who is ungenerous in his desires; and see from which of the two it is, that the cause of charity receives the deadlier infliction. There is, it must be admitted, an individual to be met with occasionally, who represents the former of these two characters; with every affection gravitating to itself, and to its sordid gratifications and interests: bent on his own pleasure, or his own avarice—and so engrossed with these, as to have no spare feeling at all for the brethren of his common nature; with a heart obstinately shut against that most powerful of applications, the look of genuine and imploring distress—and whose very countenance speaks a surly and determined exclusion on every call that proceeds from it; who in a tumult of perpetual alarm about new cases, and new tales of suffering, and new plans of philanthropy, has at length learned to resist and to resent every one of them; and, spurning the whole of this disturbance impatiently away, to maintain a firm defensive over the close system of his own selfish luxuries, and his own snug accommodations. Such a man keeps back, it must be allowed from the cause of charity, what he ought to have rendered to it in his own person. There is a diminution of the philanthropic fund up to the extent of what benevolence would have awarded out of his individual means, and individual opportunities. The good cause is a sufferer, not by any positive blow it has sustained, but by the simple

negation of one friendly and fostering hand, that else might have been stretched forth to aid and patronize it. There is only so much less of direct countenance and support, than would otherwise have been; for, in this our age, we have no conception whatever of such an example being at all infectious. For a man to wallow in prosperity himself and be unmindful of the wretchedness that is around him, is an exhibition of altogether so ungainly a character, that it will far oftener provoke an observer to affront it by the contrast of his own generosity, than to render it the approving testimony of his imitation. So that all we have lost by the man who is ungenerous in his doings, is his own contribution to the cause of philanthropy. And it is a loss that can be borne. The cause of this world's beneficence can do abundantly without him. There is a ground that is yet unbroken, and there are resources which are still unexplored, that will yield a far more substantial produce to the good of humanity, than he, and thousands as wealthy as he, could render to it out of all their capabilities.

But there is a far wider mischief inflicted on the cause of charity, by the poor man who is ungenerous in his desires; by him, whom every act of kindness is sure to call out to the reaction of some new demand, or new expectation; by him, on whom the hand of a giver has the effect, not of appeasing his wants, but of inflaming his rapacity; by him who trading among the sympathies of the credulous, can dexterously appropriate for himself a portion tenfold greater than what would have blest and brightened the aspect of many a deserving family. Him we denounce as the

worst enemy of the poor. It is he whose ravenous gripe wrests from them a far more abundant benefaction, than is done by the most lordly and unfeeling proprietor in the land. He is the arch-oppressor of his brethren; and the amount of the robbery which he has practised upon them, is not to be estimated by the alms which he has monopolized, by the food, or the raiment, or the money, which he has diverted to himself, from the more modest sufferers around him. He has done what is infinitely worse than turning aside the stream of charity. He has closed its floodgates. He has chilled and alienated the hearts of the wealthy, by the gall of bitterness which he has infused into this whole ministration. A few such harpies would suffice to exile a whole neighborhood from the attentions of the benevolent, by the distrust and the jealousy wherewith they have poisoned their bosoms, and laid an arrest on all the sensibilities that else would have flowed from them. It is he who, ever on the watch and on the wing about some enterprize of imposture, makes it his business to work and to prey on the compassionate principles of our nature; it is he who, in effect, grinds the faces of the poor, and that, with deadlier severity than even is done by the great baronial tyrant, the battlements of whose castle seem to frown, in all the pride of aristocracy, on the territory that is before it. There is at all times, a kindliness of feeling ready to stream forth, with a tenfold greater liberality than ever, on the humble orders of life; and it is he, and such as he, who have congealed it. He has raised a jaundiced medium between the rich and the poor, in virtue of which, the *former eye* the latter with suspi-

cion; and there is not a man who wears the garb, and prefers the applications of poverty, that has not suffered from the worthless imposter who has gone before him. They are, in fact, the deceit, and the indolence, and the low sordidness of a few who have made outcasts of the many, and locked against them the feelings of the wealthy in a kind of iron imprisonment. The rich man who is ungenerous in his doings keeps back one labourer from the field of charity. But a poor man who is ungenerous in his desires, can expel a thousand labourers in disgust away from it. He sheds a cruel and extended blight over the fair region of philanthropy; and many have abandoned it, who, but for him, would fondly have lingered thereupon; very many, who, but for the way in which their simplicity has been tried and trampled upon, would still have tasted the luxury of doing good unto the poor, and made it their delight, as well as their duty, to expend and expatiate among their habitations.

We say not this to exculpate the rich; for it is their part not to be weary in well-doing, but to prosecute the work and the labor of love under every discouragement. Neither do we say this to the disparagement of the poor; for the picture we have given is of the few out of the many; and the closer the acquaintance with humble life becomes, will it be the more seen of what a high pitch of generosity even the very poorest are capable. They, in truth, though perhaps they are not aware of it, can contribute more to the cause of charity, by the moderation of their desires, than the rich can by the generosity of their doings. They, without, it may be, one penny

to bestow, might obtain a place in the record of heaven, as the most liberal benefactors of their species. There is nothing in the humble condition of life they occupy, which precludes them from all that is great or graceful in human charity. There is a way in which they may equal, and even outpeer, the wealthiest of the land, in that very virtue of which wealth alone has been conceived to have the exclusive inheritance. There is a pervading character in humanity which the varieties of rank do not obliterate; and as, in virtue of the common corruption, the poor man may be as effectually the rapacious despoiler of his brethren, as the man of opulence above him—so, there is a common excellence attainable by both; and through which, the poor man may, to the full, be as splendid in generosity as the rich, and yield a far more important contribution to the peace and comfort of society.

To make this plain—it is in virtue of a generous doing on the part of a rich man, when a sum of money is offered for the relief of want; and it is in virtue of a generous desire on the part of a poor man, when this money is refused; when, with the feeling, that his necessities do not just warrant him to be yet a burden upon others, he declines to touch the offered liberality; when, with a delicate recoil from the unlooked-for proposal, he still resolves to put it for the present away, and to find, if possible, for himself a little longer; when, standing on the very margin of dependence, he would yet like to struggle with the difficulties of his situation, and to maintain this severe but honourable conflict, till hard necessity should force him to *surrender*. Let the money which

he has thus so nobly shifted from himself take some new direction to another; and who, we ask, is the giver of it? The first and most obvious reply is, that it is he who owned it: but, it is still more emphatically true, that it is he who has declined it. It came originally out of the rich man's abundance; but it was the noble-hearted generosity of the poor man that handed it onwards to its final destination. He did not emanate the gift; but it is just as much that he has not absorbed it, but left it to find its full conveyance to some neighbor poorer than himself, to some family still more friendless and destitute than his own. It was given the first time out of an overflowing fulness. It is given the second time out of stinted and self-denying penury. In the world's eye, it is the proprietor who bestowed the charity. But, in heaven's eye, the poor man who waived it away from himself to another is the more illustrious philanthropist of the two. The one gave it out of his affluence. The other gave it out of the sweat of his brow. He rose up early, and sat up late, that he might have it to bestow on a poorer than himself; and without once stretching forth a giver's hand to the necessities of his brethren, still is it possible, that by him, and such as him, may the main burden of this world's benevolence be borne.

It need scarcely be remarked, that, without supposing the offer of any sum made to a poor man who is generous in his desires, he, by simply keeping himself back from the distributions of charity, fulfils all the high functions which we have now ascribed to him. He leaves the charitable fund untouched for all that distress which is more clamorous than his own;

and we, therefore, look, not to the original givers of the money, but to those who line, as it were, the margin of pauperism, and yet firmly refuse to enter it—we look upon them as the pre-eminent benefactors of society, who narrow, as it were, by a wall of defence, the ground of human dependance, and are, in fact, the guides and the guardians of all that opulence can bestow.

Thus it is, that when Christianity becomes universal, the doings of the one party, and the desires of the other, will meet and overpass. The poor will wish for no more than the rich will be delighted to bestow; and the rule of our text, which every real Christian at present finds so practicable, will, when carried over the face of society, bind all the members of it into one consenting brotherhood. The duty of doing good to others will then coalesce with that counterpart duty which regulates our desires of good from them; and the work of benevolence will, at length, be prosecuted without that alloy of rapacity on the one hand, and distrust on the other, which serves so much to fester and disturb the whole of this ministration. To complete this adjustment, it is in every way as necessary to lay all the incumbent moralities on those who ask, as on those who confer; and never till the whole text, which comprehends the wishes of man as well as his actions, wield its entire authority over the species, will the disgusts and the prejudices, which form such a barrier between the ranks of human life, be effectually done away. It is not by the abolition of rank, but by assigning to each rank its duties, that peace, and friendship, and order, will at length be firmly estab-

lished in our world. It is by the force of principle, and not by the force of some great political overthrow, that a consummation so delightful is to be attained. We have no conception whatever, that, even in millennial days, the diversities of wealth and station will at length be equalized. On looking forward to the time when kings shall be the nursing fathers, and queens the nursing mothers of our church, we think that we can behold the perspective of as varied a distribution of place and property as before. In the pilgrimage of life, there will still be the moving procession of the few charioted in splendour on the highway, and the many pacing by their side along the line of the same journey. There will, perhaps, be a somewhat more elevated footpath for the crowd; and there will be an air of greater comfort and sufficiency amongst them; and the respectability of evident worth and goodness will sit upon the countenance of this general population. But, bating these, we look for no great change in the external aspect of society. It will only be a moral and a spiritual change. Kings will retain their sceptres, and nobles their coronets; but, as they float in magnificence along, will they look with benignant feeling on the humble wayfarers; and the honest salutations of regard and reverence will arise to them back again; and, should any weary passenger be ready to sink unfriended on his career, will he, at one time, be borne onwards by his fellows on the pathway, and, at another, will a shower of beneficence be made to descend from the crested equipage that overtakes him. It is Utopianism to think, that, in the ages of our world which are yet to come, the outward dis-

tinctions of life will not all be upholden. But it is not Utopianism, it is Prophecy to aver, that the breath of a new spirit will go abroad over the great family of mankind—so, that while, to the end of time, there shall be the high and the low in every passing generation, will the charity of kindred feelings, and of a common understanding, create a fellowship between them on their way, till they reach that heaven where human love shall be perfected, and all human greatness is unknown.

In various places in the New Testament, do we see the checks of spirit and delicacy laid upon all extravagant desires. Our text, while it enjoins the performance of good to others, up to the full measure of your desires of good from them, equally enjoins the keeping down of these desires to the measure of your performances. If Christian dispensers had only to do with Christian recipients, the whole work of benevolence would be with ease and harmony carried on. All that was unavoidable—all that came from the hand of Providence—all that was laid upon our suffering brethren by the unlooked-for visitations of accident or disease—all that pain and misfortune, which necessarily attaches to the constitution of the species—all this the text most amply provides for; and all this a Christian society would be delighted to stretch forth their means for the purpose of alleviating or doing away.

We should not have dwelt so long upon this lesson, were it not for the essential Christian principle that is involved in it. The morality of the gospel is not more strenuous on the side of the duty of giving of this world's goods when it is needed, than it is against

the desire of receiving when it is not needed. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and therefore less blessed to receive than to give. For the enforcement of this principle among the poorer brethren, did Paul give up a vast portion of his apostolical time and labor; and that he might be an ensample to the flock of working with his own hands, rather than be burdensome, did he set himself down to the occupation of a tent-maker. That lesson is surely worthy of engrossing one sermon of an uninspired teacher, for the sake of which an inspired Apostle of the Gentiles engrossed as much time as would have admitted the preparation and the delivery of many sermons. But there is no more striking indication of the whole spirit and character of the gospel in this matter, than the example of him who is the author of it—and of whom we read these affecting words, that he came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It is a righteous thing in him who has of this world's goods, to minister to the necessities of others; but it is a still higher attainment of righteousness in him who has nothing but the daily earnings of his daily work to depend upon, so to manage and to strive that he shall not need to be ministered unto. Christianity overlooks no part of human conduct; and by providing for this in particular, does it, in fact, overtake, and that with a precept of utmost importance, the habit and condition of a very extended class in human society. And never does the gospel so exhibit its adaptation to our species—and never does virtue stand in such characters of strength and sacredness before us—as when impregnated with the evangelical spirit, and urged

by evangelical motives, it takes its most direct sanction from the life and doings of the Saviour.

And he who feels as he ought, will bear with cheerfulness all that the Saviour prescribes, when he thinks how much it is for him that the Saviour has borne. We speak not of his poverty all the time that he lived upon earth. We speak not of those years when, a houseless wanderer in an unthankful world, he had not where to lay his head. We speak not of the meek and uncomplaining sufferance with which he met the many ills that oppressed the tenor of his mortal existence. But we speak of that awful burden which crushed and overwhelmed its termination. We speak of that season of the hour and the power of darkness, when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to make his soul an offering for sin. To estimate right the endurance of him who himself bore our infirmities, would we ask of any individual to recollect some deep and awful period of abandonment in his own history—when that countenance which at one time beamed and brightened upon him from above, was mantled in thickest darkness—when the iron of remorse entered into his soul—and, laid on a bed of torture, he was made to behold the evil of sin, and to taste of its bitterness. Let him look back, if he can, on this conflict of many agitations, and then figure the whole of this mental wretchedness to be borne off by the ministers of vengeance into hell, and stretched out unto eternity. And if, on the great day of expiation, a full atonement was rendered, and all that should have fallen upon us was placed upon the head of the sacrifice—let him hence compute the weight and the awfulness of those sorrows

which were carried by him on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and who poured out his soul unto the death for us. If ever a sinner, under such a visitation, shall again emerge into peace and joy in believing—if he ever shall again find his way to that fountain which is opened in the house of Judah—if he shall recover once more that sunshine of the soul, which, on the days that are past, disclosed to him the beauties of holiness here, and the glories of heaven hereafter—if ever he shall hear with effect, in this world, that voice from the mercy-seat, which still proclaims a welcome to the chief of sinners, and beckons him afresh to reconciliation—O, how gladly then should he bear throughout the remainder of his days, the whole authority of the Lord who bought him; and bind forever to his own person that yoke of the Saviour which is easy, and that burden which is light.

DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE DISSIPATION OF LARGE CITIES.

EPHESIANS V, 6.

Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

THERE is one obvious respect in which the standard of morality amongst men, differs from that pure and universal standard which God hath set up for the obedience of his subjects. Men will not demand very urgently of each other, that, which does not very nearly, or very immediately, affect their own personal and particular interest. To the violations of justice, or truth, or humanity, they will be abundantly sensitive, because these offer a most visible and quickly felt encroachment on this interest. And thus it is, that the social virtues, even without any direct sanction from God at all, will ever draw a certain portion of respect and reverence around them; and that a loud testimony of abhorrence may often be heard from the mouths of ungodly men, against all such vices as may be classed under the general designation of vices of dishonesty.

Now, the same thing does not hold true of another class of vices, which may be termed the vices of dissipation. These do not touch, in so visible or

direct a manner, on the security of what man possesses, and of what man has the greatest value for. But man is a selfish being, and therefore it is, that this ingredient of selfishness gives a keenness to his estimation of the evil and of the enormity of his former vices, which is scarcely felt at all in any estimation he may form of the latter vices. It is very true, at the same time, that if one were to compute the whole amount of the mischief they bring upon society, it would be found that the profligacies of mere dissipation go very far to break up the peace and enjoyment, and even the relative virtues of the world: and that, if these profligacies were reformed, it would work a mighty augmentation on the temporal good both of individuals and families. But this connexion between sobriety of character, and the happiness of the community, is not so apparent, because it is more remote than the connexion which obtains between integrity of character, and the happiness of the community; and man being not only a selfish but a shortsighted being, it follows, that while the voice of execration may be distinctly heard against every instance of fraud or of injustice, instances of licentiousness may occur on every side of us, and be reported on the one hand with the utmost levity, and be listened to, on the other, with the most entire and complacent toleration.

Here, then, is a point, in which the general morality of the world is at utter and irreconcilable variance with the law of God. Here is a case, in which the voice that cometh forth from the tribunal of public opinion pronounces one thing, and the voice that cometh forth from the sanctuary of God pronounces

ces another. When there is an agreement between these two voices, the principle on which obedience is rendered to their joint and concurring authority, may be altogether equivocal; and, with religious and irreligious men, you may observe an equal exhibition of all the equities, and all the civilities of life. But when there is a discrepancy between these two voices—or when the one attaches a criminality to certain habits of conduct, and is not at all seconded by the testimony of the other—then do we escape the confusion of mingled motives, and mingled authorities. The character of the two parties emerges out of the ambiguity which involved it. The law of God points, it must be allowed, as forcible an anathema against the man of dishonesty, as against the man of dissipation. But the chief burden of the world's anathema is laid on the head of the former; and therefore it is, that, on the latter ground, we meet with more discriminative tests of principle, and gather more satisfying materials for the question of —who is on the side of the Lord of hosts, and who is against him?

The passage we have now submitted to you looks hard on the votaries of dissipation. It is like eternal truth, lifting up its own proclamation, and causing it to be heard amid the errors and the delusions of a thoughtless world. It is like the Deity himself, looking forth, as he did, from a cloud, on the Egyptians of old, and troubling the souls of those who are lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. It is like the voice of heaven, crying down the voice of human society, and sending forth a note of alarm amongst its giddy *generations*. It is like the unrol-

ling of a portion of that book of higher jurisprudence, out of which we shall be judged on the day of our coming account, and setting before our eyes an enactment, which, if we disregard it, will turn that day into the day of our coming condemnation. The words of man are adverted to in this solemn proclamation of God, against all unlawful and all unhallowed enjoyments, and they are called words of vanity. He sets aside the authority of human opinion altogether; and, on an irrevocable record, has he stamped such an assertion of the authority that belongeth to himself only, as serves to the end of time for an enduring memorial of his will; and as commits the truth of the Lawgiver to the execution of a sentence of wrath against all whose souls are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. There is, in fact, a peculiar deceitfulness in the matter before us; and, in this verse, are we warned against it—"Let no man deceive you with vain words; for, because of these things, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

In the preceding verse, there is such an enumeration as serves to explain what the things are which are alluded to in the text; and it is such an enumeration, you should remark, as goes to fasten the whole terror, and the whole threat, of the coming vengeance—not on the man who combines in his own person all the characters of iniquity which are specified, but on the man who realizes any one of these characters. It is not, you will observe, the conjunction *and*, but the conjunction *or*, which is interposed between them. It is not as if we said, that the man who is dishonest, and licentious, and covetous, and

unfeeling, shall not inherit the kingdom of God—but the man who is either dishonest, or licentious, or covetous, or unfeeling. On the single and exclusive possession of any one of these attributes, will God deal with you as with an enemy. The plea, that we are a little thoughtless, but we have a good heart, is conclusively cut asunder by this portion of the law and of the testimony. And in a corresponding passage, in the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, the same peculiarity is observed in the enumeration of those who shall be excluded from God's favour, and have the burden of God's wrath laid on them through eternity. It is not the man who combines all the deformities of character which are there specified, but the man who realizes any one of the separate deformities. Some of them are the vices of dishonesty, others of them are the vices of dissipation, and, as if aware of a deceitfulness from this cause, he, after telling us that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, bids us not be deceived—for that neither the licentious, nor the abominable, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

He who keepeth the whole law, but offendeth in one point, says the Apostle James, is guilty of all. The truth is, that his disobedience on this one point may be more decisive of the state of his loyalty to God, than his keeping of all the rest. It may be the only point on which the character of his loyalty is really brought to the trial. All his conformities to the law of God might have been rendered, because they thwarted not his own inclination; and, there-

fore, would have been rendered, though there had been no law at all. The single infraction may have taken place in the only case where there was a real competition between the will of the creature, and the will of the Creator; and the event proves to which of the two the right of superiority is awarded. Allegiance to God in truth is but one principle, and may be described by one short and summary expression; and one act of disobedience may involve in it such a total surrender of the principle, as goes to dethrone God altogether from the supremacy which belongs to him. So that the account between a creature and the Creator is not like an account made up of many items, where the expunging of one item would only make one small and fractional deduction from the whole sum of obedience. If you reserve but a single item from this account, and another makes a principle of completing and rendering up the whole of it, then your character varies from his not by a slight shade of difference, but stands contrasted with it in direct and diametric opposition. We perceive, that, while with him the will of God has the mastery over all his inclinations, with you there is, at least, one inclination which has the mastery over God; that while in his bosom there exists a single and subordinating principle of allegiance to the law, in yours there exists another principle, which, on the coming round of a fit opportunity, developes itself in an act of transgression; that, while with him God may be said to walk and to dwell in him, with you there is an evil visitant, who has taken up his abode in your heart, and lodges there either in a state of dormancy or of action, according

to circumstances; that, while with him the purpose is honestly proceeded on, of doing nothing which God disapproves, with you there is a purpose not only different, but opposite, of doing something which he disapproves. On this single difference is suspended not a question of degree, but a question of kind. There are presented to us not two hues of the same colour, but two colours, just as broadly contrasted with each other as light and darkness. And such is the state of the alternative between a partial and an unreserved obedience, that while God imperatively claims the one as his due, he looks on the other as an expression of defiance against him, and against his sovereignty.

It is the very same in civil government. A man renders himself an outcast by one act of disobedience. He does not need to accumulate upon himself the guilt of all the higher atrocities in crime, ere he forfeits his life to the injured laws of his country. By the perpetration of any of them is the whole vengeance of the state brought to bear upon his person, and sentence of death is pronounced on a single murder, or forgery, or act of violent depredation.

And let us ask you just to reflect on the tone and spirit of that man towards his God, who would palliate, for example, the vices of dissipation to which he is addicted, by alleging his utter exemption from the vices of dishonesty, to which he is not addicted. Just think of the real disposition and character of his soul, who can say, "I will please God, but only when, in so doing, I also please myself; or I will do homage to his law, but just in those instances by which *I honor the rights, and* fulfil the expectations,

of society; or I will be decided by his opinion of the right and the wrong, but just when the opinion of my neighbourhood, lends its powerful and effective confirmation. But in other cases, when the matter is reduced to a bare question between man and God, when he is the single party I have to do with, when his will and his wrath are the only elements which enter into the deliberation, when judgment, and eternity, and the voice of him who speaketh from heaven are the only considerations at issue—then do I feel myself at greater liberty, and I shall take my own way, and walk in the counsel of mine own heart, and after the sight of my own eyes." O! be assured, that when all this is laid bare on the day of reckoning, and the discerner of the heart pronounces upon it, and such a sentence is to be given, as will make it manifest to the consciences of all assembled, that true and righteous are the judgments of God—there is many a creditable man who has passed through the world with the plaudits and the testimonies of all his fellows, and without one other flaw upon his reputation but the very slender one of certain harmless foibles, and certain good-humoured peculiarities, who when brought to the bar of account, will stand convicted there of having made a divinity of his own will, and spent his days in practical and habitual atheism.

And this argument is not at all affected by the actual state of sinfulness and infirmity into which we have fallen. It is true, even of saints on earth, that they commit sin. But to be overtaken in a fault is one thing; to commit that fault with the deliberate *consent of* the mind is another. There is in the

keeper of every true Christian a strenuous principle of resistance to sin, and it belongs to the very essence of the principle that it is resistance to *all* sin. It admits of no voluntary indulgence to one sin more than to another. Such an indulgence would not only change the character of what may be called the elementary principle of regeneration, but would destroy it altogether. The man who has entered on a course of Christian discipleship, carries on an unsparing and universal war with all iniquity. He has chosen Christ, for his alone master, and he struggles against the ascendency of every other. It is his sustained and habitual exertion in following after him to forsake all; so that if his performance were as complete as his endeavor, you would not merely see a conformity to some of the precepts, but a conformity to the whole law of God. At all events, the endeavor is an honest one, and so far successful, that sin has not the dominion; and sure we are, that, in such a state of things, the vices of dissipation can have no existence. These vices can be more effectually shunned, and more effectually surmounted, for example, than the infirmities of an unhappy temper. So that, if dissipation still attaches to the character, and appears in the conduct of any individual, we know not a more decisive evidence of the state of that individual as being one of the many who crowd the broad way that leadeth to destruction. We look no further to make out our estimate of his present condition as being that of a rebel, and of his future prospect as being that of spending an eternity in hell. There is no halting between two opinions in this matter. *The man who enters* a career of dissipation throws

down the gauntlet of defiance to his God. The man who persists in this career keeps on the ground of hostility against him.

Let us now endeavor to trace the origin, the progress, and the effects, of a life of dissipation.

First. Then it may be said of a very great number of young, on their entrance into the business of the world, that they have not been enough fortified against its seducing influences by their previous education at home. Generally speaking, they come out from the habitation of their parents unarmed and unprepared for the contest which awaits them. If the spirit of this world's morality reign in their own family, then it cannot be, that their introduction into a more public scene of life will be very strictly guarded against those vices on which the world placidly smiles, or at least regards with silent toleration. They may have been told, in early boyhood, of the infamy of a lie. They may have had the virtues of punctuality, and of economy, and of regular attention to business, pressed upon their observation. They may have heard a uniform testimony on the side of good behaviour, up to the standard of such current moralities as obtain in their neighbourhood; and this, we are ready to admit, may include in it a testimony against all such excesses of dissipation as would unfit them for the prosecution of this world's interests. But let us ask, whether there are not parents, who, after they have carried the work of discipline thus far, forbear to carry it any farther; who, while they would mourn over it as a family trial should any son of theirs fall a victim to *excessive dissipation*, yet are willing to tolerate the

lesser degrees of it; who, instead of deciding the question on the alternative of his heaven or his hell are satisfied with such a measure of sobriety as will save him from ruin and disgrace in this life; who, if they can only secure this, have no great objection to the moderate share he may take in this world's conformities; who feel, that in this matter there is a necessity and a power of example against which it is vain to struggle, and which must be acquiesced in; who deceive themselves with the fancied impossibility of stopping the evil in question—and say, that business must be gone through; and that, in the prosecution of it, exposures must be made; and that, for the success of it, a certain degree of accommodation to others must be observed; and seeing that it is so mighty an object for one to widen the extent of his connexions, he must neither be very retired nor very peculiar—nor must his hours of companionship be too jealously watched or inquired into—nor must we take him too strictly to task about engagements, and acquaintances, and expenditure—nor must we forget, that while sobriety has its time and its season in one period of life, indulgence has its season in another; and we may fetch from the recollected follies of our own youth, a lesson of connivance for the present occasion; and altogether there is no help for it; and it appears to us, that absolutely and totally to secure him from ever entering upon scenes of dissipation, you must absolutely and totally withdraw him from the world, and surrender all his prospects of advancement, and give up the object of such a provision for our families

as we feel to be a first and most important concern with us.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," says the Bible, "and all other things shall be added unto you." This is the promise which the faith of a Christian parent will rest upon; and in the face of every hazard to the worldly interests of his offspring, will he bring them up in the strict nurture and admonition of the Lord; and he will loudly protest against iniquity, in all its degrees, and in all its modifications; and while the power of discipline remains with him, will it ever be exerted on the side of pure, faultless, undeviating obedience; and he will tolerate no exception whatever; and he will brave all that looks formidable in singularity, and all that looks menacing in separation from the custom and countenance of the world; and feeling that his main concern is to secure for himself and for his family a place in the city which hath foundations, will he spurn all the maxims, and all the plausibilities, of a contagious neighborhood away from him. He knows the price of his Christianity, and it is that he must break off conformity with the world—nor for any paltry advantage which it has to offer, will he compromise the eternity of his children. And let us tell the parents of another spirit, and another principle, that they are as good as incurring the guilt of a human sacrifice; that they are offering up their children at the shrine of an idol; that they are parties in provoking the wrath of God against them here; and on the day when that wrath is to be revealed, shall they hear not only the moanings of

their despair, but the outcries of their bitterest execration. On that day, the glance of reproach from their own neglected offspring will throw a deeper shade of wretchedness over the dark and boundless futurity that lies before them. And if, at the time when prophets rung the tidings of God's displeasure against the people of Israel, it was denounced as the foulest of all their abominations that they caused their children to pass through the fire unto Moloch —know ye parents, who, in placing your children on some road to gainful employment, have placed them without a sigh in the midst of depravity, so near and so surrounding, that, without a miracle, they must perish, you have done an act of idolatry to the god of this world; you have commanded your household, after you, to worship him as the great divinity of their lives; and you have caused your children to make their approaches unto his presence—and, in so doing, to pass through the fire of such temptations as have destroyed them.

We do not wish to offer you an overcharged picture on this melancholy subject. What we now say is not applicable to all. Even in the most corrupt and crowded of our cities, parents are to be found, who nobly dare the surrender of every vain and flattering illusion, rather than surrender the Christianity of their children. And what is still more affecting, over the face of the country do we meet with such parents, who look on this world as a passage to another, and on all the members of their household as fellow-travellers to eternity along with them; and who, in this true spirit of believers, feel the *salvation of their children* to be, indeed, the bur-

den of their best and dearest interest; and who, by prayer, and precept, and example, have strenuously laboured with their souls, from the earliest light of their understanding; and have taught them to tremble at the way of evil doers, and to have no fellowship with those who keep not the commandments of God—nor is there a day more sorrowful in the annals of this pious family, than when the course of time has brought them onwards to the departure of their eldest boy—and he must bid adieu to his native home, with all the peace, and all the simplicity which abound in it—and as he eyes in fancy the distant town whither he is going, does he shrink as from the thought of an unknown wilderness—and it is his firm purpose to keep aloof from the dangers and the profligacies which deform it—and, should sinners offer to entice him, not to consent, and never, never, to forget the lessons of a father's vigilance, the tenderness of a mother's prayers.

Let us now, in the next place, pass from that state of things which obtains among the young at their outset into the world, and take a look of that state of things which obtains after they have got fairly introduced into it—when the children of the ungodly, and the children of the religious, meet on one common arena—when business associates them together in one chamber, and the omnipotence of custom lays it upon them all to meet together at periodic intervals, and join in the same parties, and the same entertainments—when the yearly importation of youths from the country falls in with that assimilating mass of corruption which has got so firm and so rooted an *establishment* in the town—when the frail and unshel-

tered delicacies of the timid boy have to stand a rude and a boisterous contest with the hardier depravity of those who have gone before him—when ridicule, and example, and the vain words of a delusive sophistry, which palliates in his hearing the enormity of vice, are all brought to bear upon his scruples, and to stifle the remorse he might feel when he casts his principle and his purity away from him—when, placed as he is in a land of strangers, he finds, that the tenure of acquaintanceship, with nearly all around him, is, that he render himself up in a conformity to their doings—when a voice, like the voice of protecting friendship, bids him to the feast; and a welcome, like the welcome of honest kindness, hails his accession to the society; and a spirit, like the spirit of exhilarating joy, animates the whole scene of hospitality before him; and hours of rapture roll successively away on the wings of merriment, and jocularity, and song; and after the homage of many libations has been rendered to honor, and fellowship, and patriotism, impurity is at length proclaimed in full and open cry, as one presiding divinity, at the board of their social entertainment.

And now it remains to compute the general result of a process, which we assert of the vast majority of our young, on their way to manhood, that they have to undergo. The result is, that the vast majority are initiated into all the practices, and describe the full career of dissipation. Those who have imbibed from their fathers the spirit of this world's morality, are not sensibly arrested in this career, either by the opposition of their own friends, or by the voice of their *own conscience*. Those who have imbi-

bed an opposite spirit, and have brought it into competition with an evil world, and have at length yielded, have done so, we may well suppose, with many a sigh, and many a struggle, and many a look of remembrance on those former years when they were taught to lisp the prayer of infancy, and were trained in a mansion of piety to a reverence for God, and for all his ways; and, even still, will a parent's parting advice haunt his memory, and a letter from the good old man revive the sensibilities which at one time guarded and adorned him; and, at times, will the transient gleam of remorse lighten up its agony within him; and when he contrasts the profaneness and depravity of his present companions, with the sacredness of all he ever heard or saw in his father's dwelling, it will almost feel as if conscience were again to resume her power, and the revisiting spirit of God to call him back again from the paths of wickedness; and on his restless bed will the images of guilt conspire to disturb him, and the terrors of punishment offer to scare him away; and many will be the dreary and dissatisfied intervals when he shall be forced to acknowledge, that, in bartering his soul for the pleasures of sin, he has bartered the peace and enjoyment of the world along with it. But alas! the entanglements of companionship have got hold of him; and the inveteracy of habit tyrannizes over all his purposes; and the stated opportunity again comes round; and the loud laugh of his partners in guilt chases, for another season, all his despondency away from him; and the infatuation gathers upon him every month; and a hardening process goes on within his heart; *and the deceit*fulness of sin grows apace; and he at

length becomes one of the sturdiest and most unrelenting of her votaries; and he, in his turn, strengthens the conspiracy that is formed against the morals of a new generation; and all the ingenuous delicacies of other days are obliterated; and he contracts a temperament of knowing, hackneyed, unfeeling depravity: and thus the mischief is transmitted from one year to another, and keeps up the guilty history of every place of crowded population.

And let us here speak one word to those seniors in depravity—those men who give to the corruption of acquaintances, who are younger than themselves, their countenance, their agency; and who can initiate them without a sigh in the mysteries of guilt, and care not though a parent's hope should wither and expire under the contagion of their ruffian example. It is only upon their own conversion that we can speak to them the pardon of the gospel. It is only if they themselves are washed, and sanctified, and justified, that we can warrant their personal deliverance from the wrath that is to come. But under all the concealment which rests on the futurities of God's administration, we know that there are degrees of suffering in hell—and that while some are beaten with few stripes, others are beaten with many. And surely, if they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, we may be well assured, that they who patronize the cause of iniquity—they who can beckon others to that way which leadeth on to the chambers of death—they who can aid and witness, without a sigh, the extinction of youthful modesty—surely, it may well be said of such, that on them a darker frown will fall from the

judgment-seat, and through eternity will they have to bear the pains of a fiercer indignation.

Having thus looked to the commencement of a course of dissipation, and to its progress, let us now, in the third place, look to its usual termination. We speak not at present of the coming death, and of the coming judgment, but of the change which takes place on many a votary of licentiousness, when he becomes what the world calls a reformed man; and puts on the decencies of a sober and domestic establishment; and bids adieu to the pursuits and the profligacies of youth, not because he has repented of them, but because he has outlived them. You all perceive how this may be done without one movement of the heart, or of the understanding, towards God—that it is done by many, though duty to him be not in all their thoughts—that the change, in this case, is not from the idol of pleasure unto God, but only from one idol to another—and that, after the whole of this boasted transformation, we may still behold the same body of sin and of death, and only a new complexion thrown over it. There may be the putting on of sobriety, but there is no putting on of godliness. It is a common and an easy transition to pass from one kind of disobedience to another, but it is not so easy to give up that rebelliousness of the heart which lies at the root of all disobedience. It may be easy, after the wonted course of dissipation is ended, to hold out another aspect altogether in the eye of acquaintances; but it is not so easy to recover that shock, and that overthrow, which the religious principle sustains, when a man first enters the world, and surrenders himself to the power of its enticements.

Such were some of you, says the Apostle, but ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified. Our reformed man knows not the meaning of such a process; and, most assuredly, has not at all realized it in the history of his own person. We will not say what new object he is running after. It may be wealth, or ambition, or philosophy; but it is nothing connected with the interest of his soul. It bears no reference whatever to the concerns of that great relationship which obtains between the creature and the Creator. The man has withdrawn, and perhaps for ever, from the scenes of dissipation, and has betaken himself to another way—but still it is his own way. It is not the will or the way of God that he is yet caring for. Such a man may bid adieu to profligacy in his own person. But he lifts up the light of his countenance on the profligacy of others. He gives it the whole weight and authority of his connivance. He wields, we will say it, such an instrumentality of seduction over the young, as, though not so alarming, is far more dangerous than the undisguised attempts of those who are the immediate agents of corruption. The formal and deliberate conspiracy of those who club together, at stated terms of companionship, may be all seen, and watched, and guarded against. But how shall we pursue this conspiracy into its other ramifications? How shall we be able to neutralize that insinuating poison which distils from the lips of grave and respectable citizens? How shall we be able to dissipate that gloss which is thrown by the smile of elders and superiors over the sins of forbidden indulgence? How can we disarm the bewitching sophistry which lies in all these evident tokens of

complacency, on the part of advanced and reputable men? How is it possible to trace the progress of this sore evil, throughout all the business and intercourse of society? How can we stem the influence of evil communications, when the friend, and the patron, and the man who has cheered and signalized us by his polite invitations, turns his own family-table into a nursery of licentiousness? How can we but despair of ever witnessing on earth a pure and a holy generation, when even parents will utter their polluting levities in the hearing of their own children; and vice, and humor, and gaiety, are all indiscriminately blended into one conversation; and a loud laugh, from the initiated and the uninitiated in profligacy, is ever ready to flatter and to regale the man who can thus prostitute his powers of entertainment? O! for an arm of strength to demolish this firm and far spread compact of iniquity; and for the power of some such piercing and prophetic voice, as might convince our reformed men of the baleful influence they cast behind them on the morals of the succeeding generation.

We, at the same time, have our eye perfectly open to that great external improvement which has taken place, of late years, in the manners of society. There is not the same grossness of conversation. There is not the same impatience for the withdrawment of him, who, asked to grace the outset of an assembled party, is compelled, at a certain step in the process of conviviality, by the obligations of professional decency, to retire from it. There is not so frequent an exaction of this as one of the established proprieties of social or of fashionable life. And if such an exaction

was ever laid by the omnipotence of custom on a minister of Christianity, it is such an exaction as ought never, never, to be complied with. It is not for him to lend the sanction of his presence to a meeting with which he could not sit to its final termination. It is not for him to stand associated, for a single hour, with an assemblage of men who begin with hypocrisy, and end with downright blackguardism. It is not for him to watch the progress of the coming ribaldry, and to hit the well selected moment when talk, and turbulence, and boisterous merriment, are on the eve of bursting forth upon the company, and carrying them forward to the full acme and uproar of their enjoyment. It is quite in vain to say, that he has only sanctified one part of such an entertainment. He has as good as given his connivance to the whole of it, and left behind him a discharge in full of all its abominations; and, therefore, be they who they may, whether they rank among the proudest aristocracy of our land, or are chariotcd in splendor along, as the wealthiest of the citizens, it is his part to keep as purely and indignantly aloof from such society as this, as he would from the vilest and most debasing associations of profligacy.

And now the important question comes to be put; what is the likeliest way of setting up a barrier against this desolating torrent of corruption, into which there enter so many elements of power and strength, that, to the general eye, it looks altogether irresistible? It is easier to give a negative, than an affirmative answer to this question. And, therefore it shall be our first remark, that the mischief never will be effectually combated by any expedient sepa-

rate from the growth and the transmission of personal Christianity throughout the land. If no addition be made to the stock of religious principle in a country, then the profligacy of a country will make its obstinate stand against all the mechanism of the most skilful, and plausible, and well looking contrivances. It must not be disguised from you, that it does not lie within the compass either of prisons or penitentiaries to work any sensible abatement on the wickedness of our existing generation. The operation must be of a preventive, rather than of a corrective tendency. It must be brought to bear upon boyhood; and be kept up through that whole period of random exposures through which it has to run, on its way to an established condition in society; and a high tone of moral purity must be infused into the bosom of many individuals; and their agency will effect through the channels of family and social connexion, what never can be effected by any framework of artificial regulations, so long as the spirit and character of society remain what they are. In other words, the progress of reformation will never be sensibly carried forward beyond the progress of personal Christianity in the world; and therefore, the question resolves itself into the likeliest method of adding to the number of Christian parents, who may fortify the principles of their children at their first outset in life—of adding to the number of Christian young men, who might nobly dare to be singular, and to perform the angelic office of guardians and advisers to those who are younger than themselves—of adding to the number of Christians in middle and advanced life, who might, as far as in

them lies, alter the general feeling and countenance of society; and blunt the force of that tacit but most seductive testimony, which has done so much to throw a palliative veil over the guilt of a life of dissipation.

Such a question cannot be entered upon, at present, in all its bearings, and in all its generality. And we must, therefore, simply satisfy ourselves with the object that as we have attempted already to reproach the indifference of parents, and to reproach the unfeeling depravity of those young men who scatter their pestilential levities around the whole circle of their companionship, we may now shortly attempt to lay upon the men of middle and advanced life, in general society, their share of responsibility for the morals of the rising generation. For the promotion of this great cause, it is not at all necessary to school them into any nice or exquisite contrivances. Could we only give them a desire towards it, and a sense of obligation, they would soon find their own way to the right exercise of their own influence in forwarding the interests of purity and virtue among the young. Could we only affect their consciences on this point, there would be almost no necessity whatever to guide or enlighten their understanding. Could we only get them to be Christians, and to carry their Christianity into their business, they would then feel themselves invested with a guardianship; and that time, and pains, and attention, ought to be given to the fulfilment of its concerns. It is quite in vain to ask, as if there was any mystery, or any helplessness about it, "What can they do?" For, is it not the fact most palpably obvious, that much can be done even by the mere power of exam-

ple? Or might not the master of any trading establishment send the pervading influence of his own principles among some, at least, of the servants and auxiliaries who belong to it? Or can he, in no degree whatever, so select those who are admitted, as to ward off much contamination from the branches of his employ? Or might not he, so deal out his encouragement to the deserving, as to confirm them in all their purposes of sobriety? Or might not he interpose the shield of his countenance and his testimony between a struggling youth and the ridicule of his acquaintances? Or, by the friendly conversation of half an hour, might not he strengthen within him every principle of virtuous resistance? By these, and by a thousand other expedients, which will readily suggest themselves to him who has the good will, might not a healing water be sent forth through the most corrupted of all our establishments; and it be made safe for the unguarded young to officiate in its chambers; and it be made possible to enter upon the business of the world without entering on such a scene of temptation, as to render almost inevitable the vice of the world, and its impiety, and its final and everlasting condemnation? Would Christians only be open and intrepid, and carry their religion into their merchandise; and furnish us with a single hundred of such houses in this city, where the care and character of the master formed a guarantee for the sobriety of all his dependents, it would be like the clearing out of a piece of cultivated ground in the midst of a frightful wilderness; and parents would know whither they could repair with confidence for the settlement of their offspring; and we

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DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE VITIATING INFLUENCE OF THE HIGHER U THE LOWER ORDERS OF SOCIETY.

LUKE xvii, 1, 2.

Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenc come; but wo unto him through whom they come! It were bett him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast i sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

To offend another, according to the common ac tation of the words, is to displease him.—Now, is not its acceptation in the verse before us, no several other verses of the New Testament. It v coming nearer to the scriptural meaning of the te had we, instead of offence and offending, ado the terms, scandal and scandalizing. But the signification of the phrase, to offend another, i cause him to fall from the faith and obedience of gospel. It may be such a falling away as that a recovers himself—like the disciples, who were offended in Christ, and forsook him; and, aft season of separation, were at length re-establis in their discipleship.—Or it may be such a fall away as that there is no recovery—like those in gospel of John, who, offended by the sayings of Saviour, went back, and walked no more with h

If you put such a stumbling block in the way of a neighbour, who is walking on a course of christian discipleship, as to make him fall, you offend him. It is in this sense that our Saviour uses the word, when he speaks of your own right hand, or your own right eye, offending you. They may do so, by giving you an occasion to fall.—And what is here translated offend, is, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, translated to make to offend; where Paul says, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

The little ones to whom our Saviour alludes, in this passage, he elsewhere more fully particularises, by telling us, that they are those who believe in him. There is no call here for entering into any controversy about the doctrine of perseverance. It is not necessary, either for the purpose of explaining, or of giving force to the practical lesson of the text now submitted to you. We happen to be as much satisfied with the doctrine, that he who hath a real faith in the gospel of Christ will never fall away, as we are satisfied with the truth of any identical proposition. If a professing disciple do, in fact, fall away, this is a phenomenon which might be traced to an essential defect of principle at the first; which proves, in fact, that he made the mistake of one principle for another; and that, while he thought he had the faith, it was not that very faith of the New Testament which is unto salvation. There might have been the semblance of a work of grace, without its reality. Such a work, if genuinely begun, will be carried onwards even unto perfection. But this is a point

on which it is not at all necessary, at present to dogmatize. We are led, by the text, to expatiate on the guilt of that one man who has wrecked the interest of another man's eternity. Now, it may be very true, that if the second has actually entered within the strait gate, it is not in the power of the first, with all his artifices, and all his temptations, to draw him out again. But instead of having entered the gate, he may only be on the road that leads to it; and it is enough, amid the uncertainties which, in this life, hang over the question of—who are really believers, and who are not? that it is not known in which of these two conditions the little one is; and that, therefore, to seduce him from obedience to the will of Christ, may, in fact, be to arrest his progress towards Christ, and to draw him back unto the perdition of his soul. The whole guilt of the text may be realized by him who keeps back another from the church, where he might have heard, and heard with acceptance, that word of life which he has not yet accepted; or by him, whose influence or whose example detains, in the entanglement of any one sin, the acquaintance who is meditating an outset on the path of decided Christianity—seeing, that every such outset will land in disappointment those who, in the act of following after Christ, do not forsake all; or by him who tampers with the conscience of an apparently zealous and confirmed disciple, so as to seduce him into some habitual sin, either of neglect or of performance—seeing, that the individual who but for this seduction might have cleaved fully unto the Lord, and turned out a prosperous and decided Christian, has been led to put a good conscience

away from him—and so, by making shipwreck of his faith, has proved to the world, that it was not the faith which could obtain the victory. It is true, that it is not possible to seduce the elect. But even this suggestion, perverse and unjust as it would be in its application, is not generally present to the mind of him who is guilty of the attempt to seduce, or of the act which carries a seducing influence along with it. The guilt with which he is chargeable, is that of an indifference to the spiritual and everlasting fate of others. He is wilfully the occasion of causing those who are the little ones, or, for any thing he knows, might have been the little ones of Christ, to fall; and it is against him that our Saviour, in the text, lifts not a cool but an impassioned testimony. It is of him that he utters one of the most severe and solemn denunciations of the gospel.

If this text were thoroughly pursued into its manifold applications, it would be found to lay a weight of fearful responsibility upon us all. We are here called upon not to work out our own salvation, but to compute the reflex influence of all our works, and of all our ways, on the principles of others. And when one thinks of the mischief which this influence might spread around it, even from Christians of chiefest reputation; when one thinks of the readiness of man to take shelter in the example of an acknowledged superior; when one thinks that some inconsistency of ours might seduce another into such an imitation as overbears the reproaches of his own conscience, and as, by vitiating the singleness of his eye, makes the whole of his body, instead of being full of light, to be full of darkness; when one takes

the lesson along with him into the various conditions of life he may be called by Providence to occupy, and thinks, that if, either as a parent surrounded by his family, or as a master by the members of his establishment, or as a citizen by the many observers of his neighborhood around him, he shall either speak such words, or do such actions, or administer his affairs in such a way as is unworthy of his high and immortal destination, that then a taint of corruption is sure to descend from such an exhibition, upon the immortals who are on every side of him; when one thinks of himself as the source and the centre of a contagion which might bring a blight upon the graces and the prospects of other souls besides his own—surely this is enough to supply him with a reason why, in working out his own personal salvation, he should do it with fear, and with watchfulness, and with much trembling.

But we are now upon the ground of a higher and more delicate conscientiousness, than is generally to be met with. Whereas, our object, at present, is to expose certain of the grosser offences which abound in society, and which spread a most dangerous and ensnaring influence among the individuals who compose it. To this we have been insensibly led, by the topics of that discourse which we addressed to you on a former occasion; and when it fell in our way to animadvert on the magnitude of that man's guilt, who, either by his example, or his connivance, or his direct and formal tuition, can speed the entrance of the yet unpractised young on a career of dissipation. And whether he be a parent, who, trenched in this world's maxims, can, without a struggle, and with-

out a sigh, leave his helpless offspring to take their random and unprotected way through this world's conformities; or whether he be one of those seniors in depravity, who can cheer on his more youthful companion to a surrender of all those scruples, and all those delicacies, which have hitherto adorned him; or whether he be a more aged citizen, who, having run the wonted course of intemperance, can cast an approving eye on the corruption throughout all its stages, and give a tenfold force to all its allurements, by setting up the authority of grave and reformed manhood upon its side; in each of these characters do we see an offence that is pregnant with deadliest mischief to the principles of the rising generation: and while we are told by our text, that, for such offences, there exists some deep and mysterious necessity—insomuch, that it is impossible but that offences must come—yet let us not forget to urge on every one sharer in this work of moral contamination, that never does the meek and gentle Saviour speak in terms more threatening or more reproachful, than when he speaks of the enormity of such misconduct. There cannot, in truth, be a grosser outrage committed on the order of God's administration, than that which he is in the habit of inflicting. There cannot, surely, be a directer act of rebellion, than that which multiplies the adherents of its own cause, and which swells the hosts of the rebellious. There cannot be made to rest a feller condemnation on the head of iniquity, than that which is sealed by the blood of its own victims, and its own proselytes. Nor should we wonder when that is said of such an agent for iniquity which is said of the betrayer of our

Lord. It were better for him that he had not been born. It were better for him, now that he is born, could he be committed back again to deep annihilation. Rather than that he should offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

This is one case of such offences as are adverted to in the text. Another and still more specific is beginning, we understand, to be exemplified in our own city, though it has not attained to the height or to the frequency at which it occurs in a neighboring metropolis. We allude to the doing of week-day business upon the Sabbath. We allude to that violence which is rudely offered to the feelings and the associations of sacredness, by those exactions that an ungodly master lays at times on his youthful dependents—when those hours which they wont to spend in church, they are called upon to spend in the counting-house—when that day, which ought to be a day of piety, is turned into a day of posting and of penmanship—when the rules of the decalogue are set aside, and utterly superseded by the rules of the great trading establishment; and every thing is made to give way to the hurrying emergency of orders, and clearances, and the demands of instant correspondence. Such is the magnitude of this stumbling-block, that many is the young man who has here fallen to rise no more—that, at this point of departure, he has so widened his distance from God, as never, in fact, to return to him—that, in this distressing contest between principle and necessity, the final blow has been given to his religious princi-

ples—that the master whom he serves, and under whom he earns his provision for time, has here wrested the whole interest of his eternity away from him—that, from this moment, there gathers upon his soul the complexion of a hardier and more determined impiety—and conscience once stifled now speaks to him with a feebler voice—and the world obtains a firmer lodgement in his heart—and, renouncing all his original tenderness about Sabbath, and Sabbath employments, he can now, with the thorough unconcern of a fixed and familiarised proselyte, keep equal pace by his fellows throughout every scene of profanation—and he who wont to tremble and recoil from the freedoms of irreligion with the sensibility of a little one, may soon become the most daringly rebellious of them all—and that Sabbath which he has now learned, at one time, to give to business, he, at another, gives to unhallowed enjoyments—and it is turned into a day of visits and excursions, given up to pleasure, and enlivened by all the mirth and extravagance of holiday—and, when sacrament is proclaimed from the city pulpits, he, the apt, the well trained disciple of his corrupt and corrupting superior, is the readiest to plan the amusements of the coming opportunity, and among the very foremost in the ranks of emigration—and though he may look back, at times, to the Sabbath of his father's pious house, yet the retrospect is always becoming dimmer, and at length it ceases to disturb him—and thus the alienation widens every year, till, wholly given over to impiety, he lives without God in the world.

And were we asked to state the dimensions of that iniquity which stalks regardlessly, and at large, over

the ruin of youthful principles—were we asked to find a place in the catalogue of guilt for a crime, the atrocity of which is only equalled, we understand, by its frequency—were we called to characterise the man who, so far from attempting one counteracting influence against the profligacy of his dependents, issues, from the chair of authority on which he sits, a commandment, in the direct face of a commandment from God—the man who has chartered impiety in articles of agreement, and has vested himself with a property in that time which only belongs to the Lord of the Sabbath—were we asked to look to the man who could thus overbear the last remnants of remorse in a struggling and unpractised bosom, and glitter in all the ensigns of a prosperity that is reared on the violated consciences of those who are beneath him—O! were the question put, to whom shall we liken such a man? or what is the likeness to which we can compare him? we would say, that the guilt of him who trafficked on the highway, or trafficked on that outraged coast, from whose weeping families children were inseparably torn, was far outmeasured by the guilt which could thus frustrate a father's fondest prayers, and trample under foot the hopes and the preparations of eternity.

There is another way whereby in the employ of a careless and unprincipled master, it is impossible but that offences must come. You know just as well as we do, that there are chicaneries in business; and, so long as we forbear stating the precise extent of them, there is not an individual among you who has a title to construe the assertion into an affronting charge of criminality against himself. But you

surely know as well as we, that the mercantile profession, conducted, as it often is, with the purest integrity, and laying no resistless necessity whatever for the surrender of principle on any of its members; and dignified by some of the noblest exhibitions of untainted honor, and devoted friendship, and magnificent generosity, that have ever been recorded of our nature;—you know as well as we, that it was utterly extravagant, and in the face of all observation, to affirm, that each, and every one of its numerous competitors, stood clearly and totally exempted from the sins of an undue selfishness. And, accordingly, there are certain commodious falsehoods occasionally practised in this department of human affairs. There are, for example, certain dexterous and gainful evasions, whereby the prayers of tribute are enabled, at times, to make their escape from the eagle eye of the exactors of tribute. There are even certain contests of ingenuity between individual traders, where in the higgling of a very keen and anxious negociation, each of them is tempted in talking of offers and prices, and the reports of fluctuations in home and foreign markets, to say the things which are not. You must assuredly know, that these, and such as these, then, have introduced a certain quantity of what may be called shuffling, into the communications of the trading world—insomuch, that the simplicity of yea, yea, and nay, nay, is in some degree exploded; there is a kind of understood toleration established for certain modes of expression, which could not, we are much afraid, stand the rigid scrutiny of the great day; and there is an abatement of confidence between man and man,

implying, we doubt, such a proportionate abatement of truth, as goes to extend most fearfully the condemnation that is due to all liars, who shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And who can compute the effect of all this on the young and yet unpractised observer? Who does not see, that it must go to reduce the tone of his principles; and to involve him in many a delicate struggle between the morality he has learned from his catechism, and the morality he sees in the counting-house; and to obliterate, in his mind, the distinctions between right and wrong; and, at length, to reconcile his conscience to a sin, which, like every other, deserves the wrath and the curse of God; and to make him tamper with a direct commandment, in such a way, as that falsehoods and frauds might be nothing more in his estimation, than the peccadilloes of an innocent compliance with the current practices and moralities of the world? Here then is a point, at which the way of those who conform to this world, diverges from the way of those peculiar people who are redeemed from all iniquity, and are thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Here is a grievous occasion to fall. Here is a competition between the service of God and the service of Mammon. Here is the exhibition of another offence, and the bringing forward of another temptation, to those who are entering on the business of the world, little adverted to, we fear, by those who live in utter carelessness of their own souls, and never spend a thought or a sigh about the immortality of others—but most distinctly singled out by the text as a crime of foremost magnitude in the eye of Him who judgeth righteously.

And before we quit the subject of such offences as take place in ordinary trade, let us just advert to one example of it—not so much for the frequency of its occurrence, as for the way that it stands connected in principle with a very general, and, we believe, a very mischievous offence, that takes place in domestic society. It is neither, you will observe, the avarice nor the selfishness of our nature, which forms the only obstruction in the way of one man dealing plainly with another. There is another obstruction, founded on a far more pleasing and amiable principle—even on that delicacy of feeling, in virtue of which, one man cannot bear to wound or to mortify another. It would require, for instance, a very rare, and, certainly, not a very enviable degree of hardihood, to tell another, without pain, that you did not think him worthy of being trusted. And yet, in the doings of merchandise, this is the very trial of delicacy which sometimes offers itself. The man with whom you stand committed to as great an extent as you count to be adviseable, would like, perhaps, to try your confidence in him, and his own credit, with you, a little farther; and he comes back upon you with a fresh order; and you secretly have no desire to link any more of your property with his speculation; and the difficulty is how to get the application in question disposed of; and you feel that by far the pleasantest way, to all the parties concerned, would be, to make him believe that you refuse the application not because you will not comply, but because you cannot—for that you have no more of the article he wants from you upon hand. And it would only be putting your own soul to

hazard, did you personally and by yourself make this communication: but you select, perhaps, as the organ of it some agent or underling of your establishment, who knows it to be false; and to avoid the soreness of a personal encounter with the man whom you are to disappoint, you devolve the whole business of this lying apology upon others; and thus do you continue to shift this oppressive burden away from you—or, in other words, to save your own delicacy you count not, and you care not, about another's damnation.

Now, what we call upon you to mark, is the perfect identity of principle between this case of making a brother to offend, and another case which obtains, we have heard, to a very great extent among the most genteel and opulent of our city families. In this case, you put a lie into the mouth of a dependent, and that, for the purpose of protecting your substance from such an application as might expose it to hazard or diminution. In the second case, you put a lie into the mouth of a dependent, and that, for the purpose of protecting your time from such an encroachment as you would not feel to be convenient or agreeable. And, in both cases, you are led to hold out this offence by a certain delicacy of temperament, in virtue of which, you can neither give a man plainly to understand, that you are not willing to trust him, nor can you give him to understand that you count his company to be an interruption. But in both the one and the other example, look to the little account that is made of a brother's, or of a sister's eternity; behold the guilty task that is thus unmercifully laid upon one who is shortly to appear

before the judgment-seat of Christ; think of the entanglement which is thus made to beset the path of a creature who is unperishable. That, at the shrine of Mammon, such a bloody sacrifice should be rendered by some of his unrelenting votaries, is not to be wondered at; but that the shrine of elegance and fashion should be bathed in blood—that soft and sentimental ladyship should put forth her hand to such an enormity—that she who can sigh so gently, and shed her graceful tear over the sufferings of others, should thus be accessary to the second and more awful death of her own domestics—that one who looks the mildest and the loveliest of human beings, should exact obedience to a mandate which carries wrath, and tribulation, and anguish, in its train—O! how it should confirm every Christian in his defiance to the authority of fashion, and lead him to spurn at all its folly, and at all its worthlessness.

And it is quite in vain to say, that the servant whom you thus employ as the deputy of your falsehood, can possibly execute the commission without the conscience being at all tainted or defiled by it; that a simple cottage maid can so sophisticate the matter, as, without any violence to her original principles, to utter the language of what she assuredly knows to be a downright lie; that she, humble and untutored soul, can sustain no injury when thus made to tamper with the plain English of these realms; that she can at all satisfy herself, how, by the prescribed utterance of "not at home," she is not pronouncing such words as are substantially untrue, but merely using them in another and perfectly understood meaning—and which, according

to their modern translation, denote, that the p
of whom she is thus speaking, instead of being
from home, is secretly lurking in one of the
secure and intimate of its receptacles. You ma
to darken and transform this piece of casuist
you will; and work up your own minds int
peaceable conviction that it is all right, and
should be. But be very certain, that wher
moral sense of your domestic is not already
thrown, there is, at least, one bosom within
you have raised a war of doubts and difficul
and where, if the victory be on your side, it w
on the side of him who is the great enemy of
goodness. There is, at least, one person along
line of this conveyance of deceit, who condem
herself in that which she alloweth; who, in the
guage of Paul, esteeming the practice to be unc
to her will it be unclean; who will perform her
with the offence of her own conscience, and to w
therefore, it will indeed be evil: who cannot re
obedience in this matter to her earthly superior
by an act, in which she does not stand clear
unconscious of guilt before God; and with w
therefore, the sad consequence of what we can
nothing else than a barbarous combination ag
the principles and the prospects of the lower or
is—that as she has not cleaved fully unto the L
and has not kept by the service of the one ma
and has not forsaken all at His bidding, she ca
be the disciple of Christ.

The aphorism, that he who offendeth in one
is guilty of all, tells us something more than o
way in which God adjudges condemnation to

disobedient. It also tells us of the way in which one individual act of sinfulness operates upon our moral nature. It is altogether an erroneous view of the commandments, to look upon them as so many observances to which we are bound by as many distinct and independent ties of obligation—insomuch, that the transgression of one of them may be brought about by the dissolution of one separate tie, and may leave all the others, with as entire a constraining influence and authority as before. The truth is, that the commandments ought rather to be looked upon as branching out from one great and general tie of obligation: and that there is no such thing as loosening the hold of one of them upon the conscience, but by the unfastening of that tie which binds them all upon the conscience. So that if one member in the system of practical righteousness be made to suffer, all the other members suffer along with it; and if one decision of the moral sense be thwarted, the organ of the moral sense is permanently impaired, and a leaven of iniquity infused into all its other decisions; and if one suggestion of this inward monitor be stifled, a general shock is given to his authority over the whole man; and if one of the least commandments of the law is left unfulfilled, the law itself is brought down from its rightful ascendency; and thus it is, that one act of disobedience may be the commencement and the token of a systematic universal rebelliousness of the heart against God. It is this which gives such a wide-wasting malignity to each of the separate offences on which we have now expatiated. It is this which so multiplies the means and the possibilities of corruption in the

world. It is thus that, at every one point in the intercourse of human society, there may be struck out a fountain of poisonous emanation on all who approach it; and think not, therefore, that under each of the examples we have given, we were only contending for the preservation of one single feature in the character of him who stands exposed to this world's offences. We felt it, in fact, to be a contest for his eternity; and that the case involved in it his general condition with God; and that he who leads the young into a course of dissipation—or that he who tampers with their impressions of Sabbath sacredness—or that he who, either in the walks of business, or in the services of the family, makes them the agents of deceitfulness—or that he, in short, who tempts them to transgress in any one thing, has, in fact, poured such a pervading taint into their moral constitution, as to spoil or corrupt them in all things: and that thus, upon one solitary occasion, or by the exhibition of one particular offence, a mischief may be done equivalent to the total destruction of a human soul, or to the blotting out of its prospects for immortality.

And let us just ask a master or a mistress, who can thus make free with the moral principle of their servants in one instance, how they can look for pure or correct principle from them in other instances? What right have they to complain of unfaithfulness against themselves, who have deliberately seduced another into a habit of unfaithfulness against God? Are they so utterly unskilled in the mysteries of our nature, as not to perceive, that if a man gather hardihood enough to break the Sabbath in opposition to

his own conscience, this very hardihood will avail him to the breaking of other obligations ?—that he whom, for their advantage, they have so exercised, as to fill his conscience with offence towards his God, will not scruple, for his own advantage, so to exercise himself, as to fill his conscience with offence towards his master ?—that the servant whom you have taught to lie, has gotten such rudiments of education at your hand, as that, without any further help, he can now teach himself to purloin ?—and yet nothing more frequent than loud and angry complainings against the treachery of servants ; as if, in the general wreck of their other principles, a principle of consideration for the good and interest of their employer—and who, at the same time, has been their seducer—was to survive in all its power, and all its sensibility. It is just such a retribution as was to be looked for. It is a recoil upon their own heads of the mischief which they themselves have originated. It is the temporal part of the punishment which they have to bear for the sin of our text, but not the whole of it ; for better for them that both person and property were cast into the sea, than that they should stand the reckoning of that day, when called to give an account of the souls that they have murdered, and the blood of so mighty a destruction is required at their hands.

The evil against which we have just protested, is an outrage of far greater enormity than tyrant or oppressor can inflict, in the prosecution of his worst designs against the political rights and liberties of the commonwealth. The very semblance of such designs will summon *every* patriot to his post of ob-

servation; and, from a thousand watch-towers of alarm, will the out-cry of freedom in danger be heard throughout the land. But there is a conspiracy of a far more malignant influence upon the destinies of the species that is now going on; and which seems to call forth no indignant spirit, and to bring no generous exclamation along with it. Throughout all the recesses of private and domestic history, there is an ascendency of rank and station against which no stern republican is ever heard to lift his voice—though it be an ascendency so exercised, as to be of most noxious operation to the dearest hopes and best interests of humanity. There is a cruel combination of the great against the majesty of the people—we mean the majesty of the people's worth. There is a haughty unconcern about an inheritance, which, by an unalienable right, should be theirs—we mean their future and everlasting inheritance. There is a deadly invasion made on their rights—we mean their rights of conscience; and, in this our land of boasted privileges, are the low trampled upon by the high—we mean trampled into all the degradation of guilt and of worthlessness. They are utterly bereft of that homage which ought to be rendered to the dignity of their immortal nature; and to minister to the avarice of an imperious master, or to spare the sickly delicacy of the fashionables in our land, are the truth and the piety of our population, and all the virtues of their eternity, most unfeelingly plucked away from them. It belongs to others to fight the battle of their privileges in time. But who that looks with a calculating eye on their duration that never ends, can repress an alarm of a higher order?

It belongs to others generously to struggle for the place and the adjustment of the lower orders in the great vessel of the state. But, surely, the question of their place in eternity is of mightier concern than how they are to sit and be accommodated in that pathway vehicle which takes them to their everlasting habitations.

Christianity is, in one sense, the greatest of all levellers. It looks to the elements, and not to the circumstantials of humanity; and regarding as altogether superficial and temporary the distinctions of this fleeting pilgrimage, it fastens on those points of assimilation which liken the king upon the throne to the very humblest of his subject population. They are alike in the nakedness of their birth. They are alike in the sureness of their decay. They are alike in the agonies of their dissolution. And after the one is tombed in sepulchral magnificence, and the other is laid in his sod-wrapt grave, are they most fearfully alike in the corruption to which they moulder. But it is with the immortal nature of each that Christianity has to do; and, in both the one and the other, does it behold a nature alike forfeited by guilt, and alike capable of being restored by the grace of an offered salvation. And never do the pomp and the circumstance of externals appear more humiliating, than when, looking onwards to the day of resurrection, we behold the sovereign standing without his crown, and trembling, with the subject by his side at the bar of heaven's majesty. There the master and the servant will be brought to their reckoning together; and when the one is tried upon the guilt and *the malignant* influence of his Sabbath

companies—and is charged with the profane and careless habit of his household establishment—and is reminded how he kept both himself and his domestics from the solemn ordinance—and is made to perceive the fearful extent of the moral and spiritual mischief which he has wrought as the irreligious head of an irreligious family—and how, among other things he, under a system of fashionable hypocrisy, so tampered with another's principles as to defile his conscience, and to destroy him—O! how tremendously will the little brief authority in which he now plays his fantastic tricks, turn to his own condemnation; for, than thus abuse his authority, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

And how comes it, we ask, that any master is armed with a power so destructive over the immortals who are around him? God has given him no such power: The state has not given it to him. There is no law, either human or divine, by which he can enforce any order upon his servants to an act of falsehood, or to an act of impiety. Should any such act of authority be attempted on the part of the master, it should be followed up on the part of the servant by an act of disobedience. Should your master or mistress bid you say not at home, when you know that they are at home, it is your duty to refuse compliance with such an order: and if it be asked, how can this matter be adjusted after such a violent and alarming innovation on the laws of fashionable intercourse, we answer, just by the simple substitution of truth for falsehood—just by prescribing the utterance of, engaged, which is a fact, instead of the

[illegible] of, not at home, which is a lie—just by [illegible] the principles of your servant to be of higher [illegible] than the false delicacies of your acquaintance—just by a bold and vigorous recurrence to the simplicity of nature—just by determinedly doing what is right, though the example of a whole host were against you; and by giving impulse to the current of example, when it happens to be moving in a proper direction. And here we are happy to say that fashion has of late been making a capricious and accidental movement on the side of principle—and to be blunt, and open, and manly, is now on the fair way to be fashionable—and a temper of a homelier quality is beginning to infuse itself into the luxuriousness, and the effeminacy, and the palling and excessive complaisance of genteel society—and the staple of cultivated manners is improving in firmness, and frankness, and honesty, and may, at length, by the aid of a principle of Christian rectitude, be so interwoven with the cardinal virtues, as to present a different texture altogether from the soft and the silken degeneracy of modern days.

And that we may not appear the champions of an insurrection against the authority of masters, let us further say, that while it is the duty of clerk or apprentice to refuse the doing of week-day work on the Sabbath, and while it is the duty of servants to refuse the utterance of a prescribed falsehood, and while it is the duty of every dependent, in the service of his master, to serve him only in the Lord—yet this very principle, tending as it may to a rare and occasional act of disobedience, is also the principle which renders every *servant* who adheres to it a perfect

treasure of fidelity, and attachment, and general obedience. This is the way in which to obtain a credit for his refusal, and to stamp upon it a noble consistency. In this way he will, even to the mind of an ungodly master, make up for all his particularities: and should he be what, if a Christian, he will be; should he be, at all times, the most alert in service, and the most patient of provocation, and the most cordial in affection, and the most scrupulously honest in the charge and custody of all that is committed to him—then let the post of drudgery at which he toils be humble as it may, the contrast between the meanness of his office and the dignity of his character will only heighten the reverence that is due to principle, and make it more illustrious. His scruples may, at first, be the topics of displeasure, and afterwards the topics of occasional levity; but, in spite of himself, will his employer be at length constrained to look upon them with respectful toleration. The servant will be to the master a living epistle of Christ, and he may read there what he has not yet perceived in the letter of the New Testament. He may read, in the person of his own domestic, the power and the truth of Christianity. He may positively stand in awe of his own hired servant—and, regarding his bosom as a sanctuary of worth which it were monstrous to violate, will he feel, when tempted to offer one command of impiety, that he cannot, that he dare not.

And, before we conclude, let us, if possible, try to rebuke the wealthy out of their unfeeling indifference to the souls of the poor, by the example of the *Saviour*. Let those who look on the immortality of

the poor as beneath their concern, only look unto Christ—to him who, for the sake of the poorest of us all, became poor himself, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. Let them think how the principle of all these offences which we have been attempting to expose, is in the direct face of that principle which prompted, at first, and which still presides over, the whole of the gospel dispensation. Let them learn a higher reverence for the eternity of those beneath them, by thinking of him, who, to purchase an inheritance for the poor, and to provide them with the blessings of a preached gospel, unrobed him of all his greatness; and descended himself to the lot and the labors of poverty; and toiled, to the beginning of his public ministry at the work of a carpenter; and submitted to all the horrors of a death which was aggravated by the burden of a world's atonement and made inconceivably severe by their being infused into it all the bitter of expiation. Think, O think, when some petty design of avarice or vanity would lead you to forget the imperishable souls of those who are beneath you, that you are setting yourselves in diametric opposition to that which lieth nearest to the heart of the Saviour; that you are countervailing the whole tendency of his redemption; that you are thwarting the very object of that enterprise for which all heaven is represented as in motion—and angels are with wonder looking on—and God the Father laid an appointment on the Son of his love—and he, the august personage in whom the magnificent train of prophecy, from the beginning of the world, has its theme and its fulfilment, at length came amongst us, in shrouded majesty, and

was led to the cross, like a lamb for the slaughter, and bowed his head in agony, and gave up the ghost.

And here let us address one word more to the masters and mistresses of families. By adopting the reformations to which we have been urging you, you may do good to the cause of Christianity, and yet not advance, by a single hair-breadth, the Christianity of your own souls. It is not by this one reformation, or, indeed, by any given number of reformations, that you are saved. It is by believing in Christ that men are saved. You may escape, it is sure, a higher degree of punishment, but you will not escape damnation. You may do good to the souls of your servants, by a rigid observance of the lesson of this day. But we seek the good of your own souls, also, and we pronounce upon them that they are in a state of death, till one great act be performed, and one act, too, which does not consist of any number of particular acts, or particular reformations. What shall I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And he who believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him. Do this, if you want to make the great and important transition for yourselves. Do this if you want your own name to be blotted out of the book of condemnation. If you seek to have your own persons justified before God, submit to the righteousness of God—even that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and is unto all and upon all who believe. This is the turning point of your acceptance with the Lawgiver. And at this step, also, in the history of your souls, will there be applied to you a power of motive, and will you be endowed with an obedient sensibility to

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DISCOURSE VIII.

ON THE LOVE OF MONEY.

JOB XXXi, 24—28.

If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.

WHAT is worthy of remark in this passage is, that a certain affection only known among the votaries of Paganism, should be classed under the same character and have the same condemnation with an affection, not only known, but allowed, nay cherished into habitual supremacy, all over Christendom. How universal is it among those who are in pursuit of wealth, to make gold their hope, and among those who are in possession of wealth, to make fine gold their confidence? Yet we are here told that this is virtually as complete a renunciation of God as to practise some of the worst charms of idolatry. And it might perhaps serve to unsettle the vanity of those who, unsuspicious of the disease that is in their hearts, are wholly given over to this world, and wholly without alarm in their anticipations of another,—could we convince them that the most reigning and resist-

ss desire by which they are actuated, stamps the me perversity on them, in the sight of God, as he es to be in those who are worshippers of the sun in e firmament, or are offering incense to the moon, the queen of heaven.

We recoil from an idolater, as from one who labors nder a great moral derangement, in suffering his egards to be carried away from the true God to an lol. But, is it not just the same derangement, on e part of man, that he should love any created ood, and in the enjoyment of it lose sight of the reator—that he should delight himself with the se and the possession of a gift, and be unaffected by e circumstance of its having been put into his hands y a giver—that, thoroughly absorbed with the present and the sensible gratification, there should be no oom left for the movements of duty or regard to the eing who furnished him with the materials, and enowed him with the organs, of every gratification,—hat he should thus lavish all his desires on the urrounding materialism, and fetch from it all his elights, while the thought of him who formed it is abitually absent from his heart—that, in the play f those attractions that subsist between him and he various objects in the neighbourhood of his person, there should be the same want of reference to od, as there is in the play of those attractions which ubsist between a piece of unconscious matter and he other matter that is around it—that all the influnces which operate upon the human will should manate from so many various points in the mechanm of what is formed, but that no practical or ecendant influence should come down upon it from

the presiding and the preserving Deity? Why, if such be man, he could not be otherwise, though there were no Deity. The part he sustains in the world is the very same that it would have been had the world sprung into being of itself, or without an originating mind had maintained its being from eternity. He just puts forth the evolutions of his own nature, as one of the component individuals in a vast independent system of nature, made up of many parts and many individuals. In hungering for what is agreeable to his senses, or recoiling from what is bitter or unsuitable to them, he does so without thinking of God, or borrowing any impulse to his own will from any thing he knows or believes to be the will of God. Religion has just as little to do with those daily movements of his which are voluntary, as it has to do with the growth of his body, which is involuntary; or, as it has to do, in other words, with the progress and the phenomena of vegetation. With a mind that ought to know God, and a conscience that ought to award to him the supreme jurisdiction, he lives as effectually without him as if he had no mind and no conscience; and, bating a few transient visitations of thought, and a few regularities of outward and mechanical observation, do we behold man running, and willing, and preparing, and enjoying, just as if there was no other portion than the creature—just as if the world, and its visible elements, formed the all with which he had to do.

I wish to impress upon you the distinction that there is between the love of money, and the love of what money purchases. Either of these affections may equally displace God from the heart. But

there is a malignity and an inveteracy of atheism in the former which does not belong to the latter, and in virtue of which it may be seen that the love of money is, indeed, the root of all evil.

When we indulge the love of that which is purchased by money, the materials of gratification and the organs of gratification are present with each other—just as in the enjoyments of the inferior animals, and just as in all the simple and immediate enjoyments of man; such as the tasting of food, or the smelling of a flower. There is an adaptation of the senses to certain external objects, and there is a pleasure arising out of that adaptation, and it is a pleasure which may be felt by man, along with a right and a full infusion of godliness. The primitive Christians, for example, ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. But, in the case of every unconverted man, the pleasure has no such accompaniment. He carries in his heart no recognition of that hand, by the opening of which it is, that the means and the materials of enjoyment are placed within his reach. The matter of the enjoyment is all with which he is conversant. The Author of the enjoyment is unheeded. The avidity with which he rushes onward to any of the direct gratifications of nature, bears a resemblance to the avidity with which one of the lower creation rushes to its food, or to its water, or to the open field, where it gambols in all the wantonness of freedom, and finds a high-breathed joy in the very strength and velocity of its movements. And the atheism of the former, who has a mind for the sense and knowledge of his Creator, is often as entire as the atheism of the lat-

ter, who has it not. Man, who ought to look to the primary cause of all his blessings, because he is capable of seeing thus far, is often as blind to God, in the midst of enjoyment, as the animal who is not capable of seeing him. He can trace the stream to its fountain; but still he drinks of the stream with as much greediness of pleasure, and as little recognition of its source, as the animal beneath him. In other words, his atheism, while tasting the bounties of Providence, is just as complete, as is the atheism of the inferior animals. But theirs proceeds from their incapacity of knowing God. His proceeds from his not liking to retain God in his knowledge. He may come under the power of godliness, if he would. But he chooses rather that the power of sensuality should lord it over him, and his whole man is engrossed with the objects of sensuality.

But a man differs from an animal in being something more than a sensitive being. He is also a reflective being. He has the power of thought, and inference, and anticipation, to signalize him above the beasts of the field, or of the forest; and yet will it be found, in the case of every natural man, that the exercise of those powers, so far from having carried him nearer, has only widened his departure from God, and given a more deliberate and wilful character to his atheism, than if he had been without them altogether.

In virtue of the powers of mind which belong to him, he can carry his thoughts beyond the present desires and the present gratification. He can calculate on the visitations of future desire, and on the *means of its* gratification. He cannot only follow

out the impulse of hunger that is no
he can look onwards to the successive
impulses of hunger which await him, ne can
devise expedients for relieving it. Ou great
stream of supply, which comes direct from He n
to earth, for the sustenance of all its living generations, he can draw off and appropriate a separate rill of conveyance, and direct it into a reservoir for himself. He can enlarge the capacity, or he can strengthen the emba ıkments of this rvoir.
doing the one, he a ıgments his p
common tide of weal which circulate the
world, and by doing ıe other, he augments his
curity for holding i perpetual possession.
animal who drinks out of the stream thinks
whence it issues. I man thinks of the reservoir
which yields to him portion of it. And he looks
no further. He thinks not that to fill it, there must be a great and original fountain, out of which there issueth a mighty flood of abundance for the purpose of distribution among all the tribes and families of the world. He stops short at the secondary and artificial fabric which he himself hath formed, and out of which, as from a spring, he draws his own peculiar enjoyments; and never thinks either of his own peculiar supply fluctuating with the variations of the primary spring, or of connecting these variations with the will of the great but unseen director of all things. It is true, that if this main and originating fountain be, at any time, less copious in its emission, he will have less to draw from it to his own reservoir; and in that very proportion will his share of the bounties of Providence be reduced. But still

it is to the well, or receptacle, of his own striking out that he looks, as his main security for the relief of nature's wants, and the abundant supply of nature's enjoyments. It is upon his own work that he depends in this matter, and not on the work or the will of him who is the Author of nature; who giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filleth every heart with food and gladness. And thus it is that the reason of man, and the retrospective power of man, still fail to carry him, by an ascending process to the First Cause. He stops at the instrumental cause, which, by his own wisdom and his own power, he has put into operation. In a word, the man's understanding is over-run with atheism, as well as his desires. The intellectual as well as the sensitive part of his constitution seems to be infected with it. When, like the instinctive and unreflecting animal, he engages in the act of direct enjoyment, he is like it, too, in its atheism. When he rises above the animal, and, in the exercise of his higher and larger faculties, he engages in the act of providing for enjoyment, he still carries his atheism along with him.

A sum of money is, in all its functions, equivalent to such a reservoir. Take one year with another, and the annual consumption of the world cannot exceed the annual produce which issues from the storehouse of him who is the great and the bountiful Provider of all its families. The money that is in any man's possession represents the share which he can appropriate to himself of this produce. If it be a large sum, it is like a capacious reservoir on the bank of the river of abundance. If it be laid out on firm and stable securities, still it is like a firmly

embanked reservoir. The man who toils to increase his money is like a man who toils to enlarge the capacity of his reservoir. The man who suspects a flaw in his securities, or who apprehends, in the report of failures and fluctuations, that his money is all to flow away from him, is like a man who apprehends a flaw in the embankments of his reservoir. Meanwhile, in all the care that is thus expended, either on the money or on the magazine, the originating source, out of which there is imparted to the one all its real worth, or there is imparted to the other all its real fulness, is scarcely ever thought of. Let God turn the earth into a barren desert, and the money ceases to be convertible to any purpose of enjoyment; or let him lock up that magazine of great and general supply, out of which he showers abundance among our habitations, and all the subordinate magazines formed beside the wonted stream of liberality, would remain empty. But all this is forgotten by the vast majority of our unthoughtful and unreflecting species. The patience of God is still unexhausted; and the seasons still roll in kindly succession over the heads of an ungrateful generation; and that period, when the machinery of our present system shall stop and be taken to pieces has not yet arrived; and that Spirit, who will not always strive with the children of men, is still prolonging his experiment on the powers and the perversities of our moral nature; and still suspending the edict of dissolution, by which this earth and these heavens are at length to pass away. So that the sun still shines upon us; and the clouds still drop upon us; and the earth still puts forth the bloom and the beauty

of its luxuriance; and all the ministers of heaven's liberality still walk their annual round, and scatter plenty over the face of an alienated world; and the whole of nature continues as smiling in promise, and as sure in fulfilment, as in the days of our forefathers; and out of her large and universal granary is there, in every returning year, as rich a conveyance of aliment as before, to the populous family in whose behalf it is opened. But it is the business of many among that population, each to erect his own separate granary, and to replenish it out of the general store, and to feed himself and his dependents out of it. And he is right in so doing. But he is not right in looking to his own peculiar receptacle, as if it were the first and the emanating fountain of all his enjoyments. He is not right in thus idolising the work of his own hands—awarding no glory and no confidence to him in whose hands is the key of that great storehouse, out of which every lesser storehouse of man derives its fulness. He is not right, in laboring after the money which purchaseth all things, to avert the earnestness of his regards from the Being who provides all things. He is not right, in thus building his security on that which is subordinate, unheeding and unmindful of him who is supreme. It is not right, that silver, and gold, though unshaped into statuary, should still be doing, in this enlightened land, what the images of Paganism once did. It is not right, that they should thus supplant the deference which is owing to the God and the governor of all things—or that each man amongst us should in the secret homage of trust and satisfaction which he renders to his bills, and his deposits, and his deeds

property and possession, endow these various articles with the same moral ascendency over his heart, as the household gods of antiquity had over the idolaters of antiquity—making them as effectually usurp the place of the divinity, and dethrone the one Monarch of heaven and earth from that pre-eminence of trust and of affection that belongs to him.

He who makes a god of his pleasure, renders to this idol the homage of his senses. He who makes a god of his wealth, renders to this idol the homage of his mind; and he, therefore, of the two, is the more hopeless and determined idolater. The former is goaded on to his idolatry, by the power of appetite. The latter cultivates his with wilful and deliberate perseverance; consecrates his very highest powers to its service; embarks in it, not with the heat of passion, but with the coolness of steady and calculating principle; fully gives up his reason and his time, and all the faculties of his understanding, as well as all the desires of his heart, to the great object of a fortune in this world; makes the acquirement of gain the settled aim, and the prosecution of that aim the settled habit of his existence; sits the whole day long at the post of his ardent and unremitting devotions; and, as he labors at the desk of his counting-house, has his soul just as effectually seduced from the living God to an object distinct from him, and contrary to him, as if the ledger over which he was bending was a book of mystical characters, written in honor of some golden idol placed before him, and with a view to render this idol propitious to himself and to his family. Baal and Moloch were not more substantially the *gods of rebellious Israel*, than Mammon is the god of

all his affections. To the fortune he has reared, or is rearing, for himself and his descendants, he ascribes all the power and all the independence of a divinity. With the wealth he has gotten by his own hands, does he feel himself as independent of God, as the Pagan does, who, happy in the fancied protection of an image made with his own hand, suffers no disturbance to his quiet, from any thought of the real but the unknown Deity. His confidence is in his treasure, and not in God. It is there that he places all his safety and all his sufficiency. It is not on the Supreme Being, conceived in the light of a real and a personal agent, that he places his dependence. It is on a mute and material statue of his own erection. It is wealth, which stands to him in the place of God —to which he awards the credit of all his enjoyments —which he looks to as the emanating fountain of all his present sufficiency—from which he gathers his fondest expectations of all the bright and fancied blessedness that is yet before him—on which he rests as the firmest and stablest foundation of all that the heart can wish, or the eye can long after, both for himself and for his children. It matters not for him, that all his enjoyment comes from a primary fountain, and that his wealth is only an intermediate reservoir. It matters not to him, that, if God were to set a seal upon the upper storehouse in heaven, or to blast and to burn up all the fruitfulness of earth, he would reduce, to the worthlessness of dross, all the silver and the gold that abound in it. Still the gold and the silver are his gods. His own fountain is between him and the fountain of original supply. *His wealth* is between him and God. Its various

lodging places, whether in the bank, or the of registration, or in the depository and title-deeds—these are the sanctuaries o cret worship—these are the highplaces of his on; and never did the devout Israelite look with more intentness towards Mount Zion, and with his face towards Jerusalem, than he does to his wealth, as to the mountain and strong hold of his security. Nor could the Supreme be nore effectually deposed from the homage of trust and gratitude than he actually is, though this wealth were recalled from its various investments; and turn d into one mass of gold; and cast into a piece of m lten statuary; and enshrined on a pedestal, around all household might assemble, and make it of their family devotions; and plied every hour of every day with all the fooleries of a senseless and degrading Paganism. It is thus, that God may keep up the charge of idolatry against us, even after all its images have been overthrown. It is thus that dissuasives from idolatry are still addresssed, in the New Testament, to the pupils of a new and better dispensation; that little children are warned against idols; and all of us are warned to flee from covetousness, which is idolatry.

To look no further than to fortune as the dispenser of all the enjoyments which money can purchase, is to make that fortune stand in the place of God. It is to make sense shut out faith, and to rob the King eternal and invisible of that supremacy, to which all the blessings of human existence, and all the varieties of human condition, ought, in every instance, and in every particular, to be referred. But, as we have already remarked, the love of money is one affection,

and the love of what is purchased by money is another. It was at first, we have no doubt, loved for the sake of the good things which it enabled its possessor to acquire. But whether, as the result of associations in the mind so rapid as to escape the notice of our own consciousness—or as the fruit of an infection running by sympathy among all men busily engaged in the prosecution of wealth, as the supreme good of their being—certain it is, that money, originally pursued for the sake of other things, comes at length to be prized for its own sake. And, perhaps, there is no one circumstance which serves more to liken the love of money to the most irrational of the heathen idolatries, than that it at length passes into the love of money for itself; and acquires a most enduring power over the human affections, separately altogether from the power of purchase and of command which belongs to it, over the proper and original objects of human desire.—The first thing which set man agoing in the pursuit of wealth, was that, through it, as an intervening medium, he found his way to other enjoyments; and it proves him, as we have observed, capable of a higher reach of anticipation than the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the air, that he is thus able to calculate, and to foresee, and to build up a provision for the wants of futurity. But, mark how soon this boasted distinction of his faculties is overthrown, and how near to each other lie the dignity and the debasement of the human understanding. If it evinced a loftier mind in man than in the inferior animals, that he invented money, and by the acquisition of it can both secure abundance for himself, and transmit this

bundance to the future generations of his family—what have we to offer, in vindication of this intellectual eminence, when we witness how soon it is, that the pursuit of wealth ceases to be rational?—How, instead of being prosecuted as an instrument, either for the purchase of ease, or the purchase of enjoyment, both the ease and enjoyment of a whole life are tendered up as sacrifices at its shrine?—How, from being sought after as a minister of gratification to the appetites of nature, it at length brings nature into bondage, and robs her of all her simple delights, and pours the infusion of wormwood into the currency of her feelings?—making that man sad who ought to be cheerful, and that man who ought to rejoice in his present abundance, filling him either with the cares of an ambition which never will be satisfied, or with the apprehensions of a distress which in all its pictured and exaggerated evils, will never be realised. And it is wonderful, it is passing wonderful, that wealth, which derives all that is true and sterling in its worth from its subserviency to other advantages, should, apart from all thought about this subserviency, be made the object of such fervent and fatiguing devotion. Insomuch, that never did Indian devotee inflict upon himself a severer agony at the footstool of his Paganism, than those devotees of wealth who, for its acquirement as their ultimate object, will forego all the uses for which alone it is valuable—will give up all that is genuine or tranquil in the pleasures of life; and will pierce themselves through with many sorrows; and will undergo all the fiercer tortures of the mind; and, instead of employing what they have, to smooth their passage

through the world, will, upon the hazardous sea of adventure, turn the whole of this passage into a storm—thus exalting wealth, from a servant unto a lord, who, in return for the homage that he obtains from his worshippers, exercises them, like Rehoboam his subjects of old, not with whips but with scorpions—with consuming anxiety, with never-sated desire, with brooding apprehension, and its frequent and ever-flitting spectres, and the endless jealousies of competition with men as intently devoted, and as emulous of a high place in the temple of their common idolatry, as themselves. And, without going to the higher exhibitions of this propensity, in all its rage and in all its restlessness, we have only to mark its workings on the walk of even and every-day citizenship; and there see, how, in the hearts even of its most common-place votaries, wealth is followed after, for its own sake; how, unassociated with all for which reason pronounces it to be of estimation, but, in virtue of some mysterious and undefinable charm, operating not on any principle of the judgment, but on the utter perversity of judgment, money has come to be of higher account than all that is purchased by money, and has attained a rank coordinate with that which our Saviour assigns to the life and to the body of man, in being reckoned more than meat and more than raiment. Thus making that which is subordinate to be primary, and that which is primary subordinate; transferring, by a kind of fascination, the affections away from wealth in use, to wealth in idle and unemployed possession,—insomuch, that the most welcome intelligence you could give to the proprietor of many a snug deposit,

in some place of secure and progressive accumulation, would be, that he should never require any part either of it or of its accumulation back again for the purpose of expenditure—and that, to the end of his life, every new year should witness another unimpaired addition to the bulk or the aggrandizement of his idol. And it would just heighten his enjoyment could he be told, with prophetic certainty, that this process of undisturbed augmentation would go on with his children's children, to the last age of the world; that the economy of each succeeding race of dependants would leave the sum with its interest untouched, and the place of its sanctuary unviolated; and, that through a series of indefinite generations, should the magnitude ever grow, and the lustre ever heighten, of that household god, which he had erected for his own senseless adoration, and bequeathed as an object of as senseless adoration to his family.

We have the authority of that word which has been pronounced a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that it cannot have two masters, or that there is not room in it for two great and ascendant affections. The engrossing power of one such affection is expressly affirmed of the love for Mammon or the love for money thus named and characterised as an idol. Or, in other words, if the love of money be in the heart, the love of God is not there. If a man be trusting in uncertain riches, he is not trusting in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. If his heart be set upon covetousness, it is set upon an object of idolatry. The true divinity is moved away from his place, and, worse than atheism, which would only leave it empty, has the love of

wealth raised another divinity upon his throne. So that covetousness offers a more daring and positive aggression on the right and territory of the godhead than even infidelity. The latter would only desecrate the sanctuary of heaven; the former would set up an abomination in the midst of it. It not only strips God of love and of confidence, which are his prerogatives, but it transfers them to another. And little does the man who is proud in honor, but, at the same time, proud and peering in ambition—little does he think, that, though acquitted in the eye of all his fellows, there still remains an atrocity of a deeper character, than even that of atheism, with which he is chargeable. Let him just take an account of his mind, amid the labors of his merchandise, and he will find that the living God has no ascendency there; but that wealth just as much as if personified into life, and agency, and power, wields over him all the ascendency of God. Where his treasure is, his heart is also; and, linking as he does his main hope with its increase, and his main fear with its fluctuations and its failures, he has as effectually dethroned the Supreme from his heart, and deified an usurper in his room, as if fortune had been embodied into a goddess, and he were in the habit of repairing, with a crowd of other worshippers, to her temple. She, in fact, is the dispenser of that which he chiefly prizes in existence. A smile from her is worth all the promises of the Eternal, and her threatening frown more dreadful to the imagination than all his terrors.

And the disease is as near to universal as it is virulent. Wealth is the goddess whom all the world worshippeth. There is many a city in our empire,

of which, with an eye of apostolical discernment, it may be seen, that it is almost wholly given over to idolatry. If a man look no higher than to his money for his enjoyments, then money is his god. It is the god of his dependence, and the god upon whom his heart is staid. Or if, apart from other enjoyments, by some magical power of its own, has gotten the ascendency, then still it is followed after as the supreme good; and there is an actual supplanting of the living God. He is robbed of the gratitude that we owe him for our daily sustenance; for, instead of receiving it as if it came direct out of his hand, we receive it as if it came from the hand of a secondary agent, to whom we ascribe all the stability and independence of God. This wealth, in fact, obscures in us the character of God, as the real though unseen Author of our various blessings; and as if by a material intervention, does it hide from the perception of nature, the hand which feeds, and clothes, and maintains us in life, and in all the comforts and necessaries of life. It just has the effect of thickening still more that impalpable veil which lies between God and the eye of the senses. We lose all discernment of him as the giver of our comforts; and coming, as they appear to do, from that wealth which our fancies have raised into a living personification, does this idol stand before us, not as a deputy but as a substitute for that Being, with whom it is that we really have to do. All this goes both to widen and to fortify that disruption which has taken place between God and the world. It adds the power of one great master idol to the seducing influence of all the lesser idolatries. When the liking and the

confidence of men are towards money, there is no direct intercourse, either by the one or the other of these affections towards God; and, in proportion as he sends forth his desires, and rests his security on the former, in that very proportion does he renounce God as his hope, and God as his dependence.

And to advert, for one moment, to the misery of this affection, as well as to its sinfulness. He, over whom it reigns, feels a worthlessness in his present wealth, after it is gotten; and when to this we add the restlessness of a yet unsated appetite, lording it over all his convictions, and panting for more; when, to the dulness of his actual satisfaction in all the riches that he has, we add his still unquenched, and indeed unquenchable desire for the riches that he has not; when we reflect that as, in the pursuit of wealth, he widens the circle of his operation, so he lengthens out the line of his open and hazardous exposure, and multiplies, along the extent of it, those vulnerable points from which another and another dart of anxiety may enter into his heart; when he feels himself as if floating on an ocean of contingency, on which, perhaps, he is only borne up by the breath of a credit that is fictitious, and which, liable to burst every moment, may leave him to sink under the weight of his overladen speculation; when, suspended on the doubtful result of his bold and uncertain adventure, he dreads the tidings of disaster in every arrival, and lives in a continual agony of feeling, kept up by the crowd and turmoil of his manifold distractions, and so overspreading the whole compass of his thoughts, as to leave not one narrow space for the thought of eternity;—will any beholder just

look to the mind of this unhappy man, thus tost and bewildered and thrown into a general unceasing frenzy, made out of many fears and many agitations, and not say, that the bird of the air, which sends forth its unreflecting song, and lives on the fortuitous bounty of Providence, is not higher in the scale of enjoyment than he? And how much more, then, the quiet Christian beside him, who, in possession of food and raiment has that godliness with contentment which is great gain—who with the peace of heaven in his heart, and the glories of heaven in his eye, has found out the true philosophy of existence; has sought a portion where alone a portion can be found, and, in bidding away from his mind the love of money, has bidden away all the cross and all the carefulness along with it.

Death will soon break up every swelling enterprise of ambition, and put upon it a most cruel and degrading mockery. And it is, indeed an affecting sight, to behold the workings of this world's infatuation among so many of our fellow mortals nearing and nearing every day to eternity, and yet, instead of taking heed to that which is before them, mistaking their temporary vehicle for their abiding home—and spending all their time and all their thought upon its accommodations. It is all the doing of our great adversary, thus to invest the trifles of a day in such characters of greatness and durability; and it is, indeed, one of the most formidable of his wiles. And whatever may be the instrument of reclaiming men from this delusion, it certainly is not any argument either about the shortness of life, or the certainty and awfulness of its approaching termination. On

this point man is capable of a stout-hearted resistance, even to ocular demonstration; nor do we know a more striking evidence of the bereavement which must have passed upon the human faculties, than to see how, in despite of arithmetic,—how, in despite of manifold experience,—how, in despite of all his gathering wrinkles, and all his growing infirmities—how, in despite of the ever-lessening distance between him and his sepulchre, and of all the tokens of preparation for the onset of the last messenger, with which, in the shape of weakness, and breathlessness, and dimness of eyes, he is visited; will the feeble and asthmatic man still shake his silver locks in all the glee and transport of which he is capable, when he hears of his gainful adventures, and his new accumulations. Nor can we tell how near he must get to his grave, or how far on he must advance in the process of dying, ere gain cease to delight, and the idol of wealth cease to be dear to him. But when we see that the topic is trade and its profits, which lights up his faded eye with the glow of its chiefest ecstacy, we are as much satisfied that he leaves the world with all his treasure there, and all the desires of his heart there, as if acting what is told of the miser's death-bed, he made his bills and his parchments of security the companions of his bosom, and the last movements of his life were a fearful, tenacious, determined grasp, of what to him formed the all for which life was valuable.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH,

BEFORE

THE SOCIETY

FOR THE

RELIEF OF THE DESTITUTE SICK,

APRIL 18, 1813.

BY THOMAS CHALMERS,
MINISTER OF THE TRON CHURCH, GLASGOW.

SERMON.

PSALM xli. 1.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

THERE is an evident want of congeniality between the wisdom of this world, and the wisdom of the Christian. The term "wisdom," carries my reverence along with it. It brings before me a grave and respectable character, whose rationality predominates over the inferior principles of his constitution, and to whom I willingly yield that peculiar homage which the enlightened, and the judicious, and the manly, are sure to exact from a surrounding neighbourhood. Now, so long as this wisdom has for its object some secular advantage, I yield it an unqualified reverence. It is a reverence which all understand, and all sympathize with. If, in private life, a man be wise in the management of his farm, or his fortune, or his family; or if, in public life, he have wisdom to steer an empire through all its difficulties, and to carry it to aggrandizement and renown—the respect which I feel for such wisdom as this, is most cordial and entire, and supported by the universal acknowledgment of all whom I call to attend to it.

Let me now suppose that this wisdom has changed its object—that the man whom I am representing to

exemplify this respectable attribute, instead of being wise for time, is wise for eternity—that he labours by the faith and sanctification of the gospel for unperishable honours—that, instead of listening to him with admiration at his sagacity, as he talks of business, or politics, or agriculture, we are compelled to listen to him talking of the hope within the veil, and of Christ being the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto salvation. What becomes of your respect for him now? Are there not some of you who are quite sensible that this respect is greatly impaired, since the wisdom of the man has taken so unaccountable a change in its object and in its direction? The truth is, that the greater part of the world feel no respect at all for a wisdom which they do not comprehend. They may love the innocence of a decidedly religious character, but they feel no sublime or commanding sentiment of veneration for its wisdom. All the truth of the Bible, and all the grandeur of eternity, will not redeem it from a certain degree of contempt. Terms which lower, undervalue, and degrade, suggest themselves to the mind; and strongly dispose it to throw a mean and disagreeable colouring over the man who, sitting loose to the objects of the world, has become altogether a Christian. It is needless to expatiate; but what I have seen myself, and what must have fallen under the observation of many whom I address, carry in them the testimony of experience to the assertion of the Apostle, "that the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Now, what I have said of the respectable attribute of wisdom, is applicable, with almost no variation, to another attribute of the human character, to which I would assign the gentler epithet of "lovely." The attribute to which I allude, is that of benevolence. This is the burden of every poet's song, and every eloquent and interesting enthusiast gives it his testimony. I speak not of the enthusiasm of methodists and devotees—I speak of that enthusiasm of fine sentiment which embellishes the pages of elegant literature, and is addressed to all her sighing and amiable votaries, in the various forms of novel, and poetry, and dramatic entertainment. You would think if any thing could bring the Christian at one with the world around him, it would be this; and that, in the ardent benevolence which figures in novels, and sparkles in poetry, there would be an entire congeniality with the benevolence of the gospel. I venture to say, however, that there never existed a stronger repulsion between two contending sentiments, than between the benevolence of the Christian, and the benevolence which is the theme of elegant literature—that the one, with all its accompaniments of tears, and sensibilities, and interesting cottages, is neither felt nor understood by the Christian as such; and the other, with its work and labours of love—its *enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and its living not to itself, but to the will of Him who died for us, and who rose again, is not only not understood, but positively nauseated, by the poetical *amateur*.

But the contrast does not stop here. The benevolence of the gospel is not only at antipodes with the

visionary sons and daughters of poetry, but it even varies in some of its most distinguishing features with the experimental benevolence of real and familiar life. The fantastic benevolence of poetry is now indeed pretty well exploded; and, in the more popular works of the age, there is a benevolence of a far truer and more substantial kind substituted in its place—the benevolence which you meet with among men of business and observation—the benevolence which bustles and finds employment among the most public and ordinary scenes, and which seeks for objects, not where the flower blows loveliest, and the stream with its gentle murmurs, falls sweetest on the ear, but finds them in his every day walks—goes in quest of them through the heart of the great city, and is not afraid to meet them in its most putrid lanes and loathsome receptacles.

Now, it must be acknowledged, that this benevolence is of a far more respectable kind than that poetic sensibility, which is of no use, because it admits of no application. Yet I am not afraid to say, that, respectable as it is, it does not come up to the benevolence of the Christian, and is at variance, in some of its most capital ingredients, with the morality of the gospel. It is well, and very well, as far as it goes; and that Christian is wanting to the will of his master who refuses to share and go along with it. The Christian will do all this, but he would like to do more; and it is at the precise point where he proposes to do more, that he finds himself abandoned by the co-operation and good wishes of those who had hitherto supported him. The Christian goes as far as the votary of this useful benevolence, but then he

would like to go further, and this is the point at which he is mortified to find that his old coadjutors refuse to go along with him; and that, instead of being strengthened by their assistance, he has their contempt and their ridicule; or, at all events, their total want of sympathy, to contend with. The truth is, that the benevolence I allude to, with all its respectable air of business and good sense, is altogether a secular benevolence. Through all the extent of its operations, it carries in it no reference to the eternal duration of its object. Time, and the accommodations of time, form all its subject and all its exercise. It labours, and often with success, to provide for its object a warm and well-sheltered tenement, but it looks not beyond the few little years when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved—when the soul shall be driven from its perishable tenement, and the only benevolence it will acknowledge or care for, will be the benevolence of those who have directed it to a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This, then, is the point at which the benevolence of the gospel separates from that worldly benevolence, to which, as far as it goes, I offer my cheerful and unmingled testimony. The one minds earthly things, the other has its conversation in heaven. Even when the immediate object of both is the same, you will generally perceive an evident distinction in the principle. Individuals, for example, may co-operate, and will often meet in the same room, be members of the same society, and go hand in hand cordially together for the education of the poor. But the forming habits of virtuous industry, and good members of society, which are the sole

consideration in the heart of the worldly philanthropist, are but mere accessions in the heart of the Christian. The main impulse of his benevolence lies in furnishing the poor with the means of enjoying that bread of life which came down from heaven, and in introducing them to the knowledge of those scriptures which are the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. Now, it is so far a blessing to the world that there is a co-operation in the immediate object. But what I contend for, is, that there is a total want of congeniality in the principle—that the moment you strip the institution of its temporal advantages, and make it repose on the naked grandeur of eternity, it is fallen from, or laughed at, as one of the chimeras of fanaticism, and left to the despised efforts of those whom they esteem to be unaccountable people, who subscribe for missions, and squander their money on Bible societies. Strange effect, you would think, of eternity to degrade the object with which it is connected! But so it is. The blaze of glory, which is thrown around the martyrdom of a patriot or a philosopher, is refused to the martyrdom of a Christian. When a statesman dies, who lifted his intrepid voice for the liberty of the species, we hear of nothing but of the shrines and the monuments of immortality. Put into his place one of those sturdy reformers, who, unmoved by councils and inquisitions, stood up for the religious liberties of the world; and it is no sooner done, than the full tide of congenial sympathy and admiration is at once arrested. We have all heard of the benevolent apostleship of Howard, and what Christian will be *behind* his fellows with his applauding testimony?

will they, on the other hand, sha
asm when he tells them of the
aul, who, in the sublimer sense of
mplished the liberty of the captive, a
that sat in darkness out of the prison
they share in the holy benevolen
le, when he pours out his arden
behalf of his countrymen? They were at
on the eve of the c[illegible]rings.
e vengeance of the Ro[illegible]ver was muster-
o bear upon them. The siege and des
eir city form one of the most dreadful ti
e history of war. Yet Paul seems to have
ner object in his eye. It was their souls and
eternity which engrossed him. Can you sym-
se with him in this principle, or join in kindred
volence with him, when he says, that "my
's desire and prayer for Israel is that they
t be saved?"

t to bring my list of examples to a close, the
remarkable of them all may be collected from
istory of the present attempts which are now
ng to carry the knowledge of divine revelation
he Pagan and uncivilized countries of the world.
, it may be my ignorance, but I am certainly
ware of the fact, that without a book of religious
—without religion, in fact, being the errand and
ion, we have never been able in modern times
r to compel the attention and to subdue the
s of savages, as to throw in among them the
nd the possession of a written language. Cer-
t is, however, at all events, that this very great-
ep in the process of converting a wild man of

the woods into a humanized member of society, has been accomplished by christian missionaries. They have put into the hands of barbarians this mighty instrument of a written language, and they have taught them how to use it.* They have formed an orthography for wandering and untutored savages. They have given a shape and a name to their barbarous articulations; and the children of men, who lived on the prey of the wilderness, are now forming in village schools to the arts and the decencies of cultivated life. Now, I am not involving you in the controversy whether civilization should precede Christianity, or Christianity should precede civilization. It is not to what has been said on the subject, but to what has been done that we are pointing your attention. We appeal to the fact; and as an illustration of the principle we have been attempting to lay before you, we call upon you to mark the feelings, and the countenance, and the language, of the mere academic moralist, when you put into his hand the authentic and proper document where the fact is recorded—we mean a missionary report, or a missionary magazine. We know that there are men who have so much of the firm nerve and hardihood of philosophy about them, as not to be repelled from

* As, for instance, Mr. John Elliot, and the Moravian brethren among the Indians of New-England and Pennsylvania; the Moravians of South America; Mr. Hans Egede, and the Moravians in Greenland; the latter in Labradore, among the Eskimaux; the missionaries of Otaheite, and other South Sea islands; and Mr. Brunton, under the patronage of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, who reduced the language of the Susoos, a nation on the coast of Africa, to writing and grammatical form, and printed in it a spelling-book, vocabulary, catechism, and some tracts. Other instances besides might be given.

truth in whatever shape, or from whatever quarter it comes to them. But there are others of a humbler cast, who have transferred their homage from the omnipotence of truth, to the omnipotence of a name, who, because missionaries, while they are accomplishing the civilization are labouring also for the eternity of savages, have lifted up the cry of fanaticism against them—who, because missionaries revere the word of God, and utter themselves in the language of the New Testament, nauseate every word that comes from them as overrun with the flavour and phraseology of methodism—who, are determined, in short, to abominate all that is missionary, and suffer the very sound of the epithet to fill their minds with an overwhelming association of repugnance, and prejudice, and disgust.

We would not have counted this so remarkable an example, had it not been that missionaries are accomplishing the very object on which the advocates for civilization love to expatiate. They are working for the temporal good far more effectually than any adventurer in the cause ever did before; but mark the want of congeniality between the benevolence of this world, and the benevolence of the Christian; they incur contempt, because they are working for the spiritual and eternal good also. Nor do the earthly blessings which they scatter so abundantly in their way, redeem from scorn the purer and the nobler principle which inspires them.

These observations seem to be an applicable introduction to the subject before us. I call your attention to *the way* in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say, in the

text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provides them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful for the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may embitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle within which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration*—Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor—a grave and prosaic exercise I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstacies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognizance of a higher faculty—a faculty of steadier operation than to be weary in well-doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation as well as of sentiment; and in so do-

ing, it puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle. I want, my brethren, to press its advantages upon you, for I can in no other way recommend the society whose claims I am appointed to lay before you, so effectually to your patronage. My time will only permit me to lay before you a few of their advantages, and I shall therefore confine myself to two leading particulars.

1. The man who considers the poor, instead of slumbering over the emotions of a useless sensibility, among those imaginary beings whom poetry and romance have laid before him in all the elegance of fictitious history, will bestow the labour and the attention of actual business among the poor of the real and the living world. Benevolence is the burden of every romantic tale, and of every poet's song. It is dressed out in all the fairy enchantments of imagery and eloquence. All is beauty to the eye and music to the ear. Nothing seen but pictures of felicity, and nothing heard but the soft whispers of gratitude and affection. The reader is carried along by this soft and delightful representation of virtue. He accompanies his hero through all the fancied

variation of his history. He goes along with him to the cottage of poverty and disease, surrounded, as we may suppose, with all the charms of rural obscurity, and where the murmurs of an adjoining rivulet accord with the finer and more benevolent sensibilities of the mind. He enters this enchanting retirement, and meets with a picture of distress, adorned in all the elegance of fiction. Perhaps a father lies on a bed of languishing, and supported by the labours of a pious and affectionate family, where kindness breathes in every word, and anxiety sits upon every countenance—where the industry of his children struggles in vain to supply the cordials which his poverty denies him—where nature sinks every hour, and all feel a gloomy foreboding, which they strive to conceal, and tremble to express. The hero of romance enters, and the glance of his benevolent eye enlightens this darkest recess of misery. He turns him to the bed of languishing, tells the sick man that there is still hope, and smiles comfort on his despairing children. Day after day, he repeats his kindness and his charity. They hail his approach as the footsteps of an angel of mercy. The father lives to bless his deliverer. The family reward his benevolence by the homage of an affectionate gratitude; and, in the piety of their evening prayer, offer up thanks to the God of heaven, for opening the hearts of the rich to kindly and beneficent attentions. The reader weeps with delight. The visions of paradise play before his fancy. His tears flow, and his heart dissolves in all the luxury of tenderness.

Now, we do not deny that the members of the Destitute Sick Society *may* at times have met with

some such delightful scene to soothe and encourage them. But put the question to any of their visiters, and he will not fail to tell you, that if they had never moved but when they had something like this to excite and to gratify their hearts, they would seldom have moved at all; and their usefulness to the poor would have been reduced to a very humble fraction of what they have actually done for them. What is this but to say, that it is the business of a religious instructor to give you, not the elegant, but the true representation of benevolence—to represent it not so much as a luxurious indulgence to the finer sensibilities of the mind, but according to the sober declaration of Scripture, as a work and as a labour—as a business in which you must encounter vexation, opposition, and fatigue; where you are not always to meet with that elegance, which allures the fancy, or with that humble and retired adversity, which interests the more tender propensities of the heart; but as a business where reluctance must often be overcome by a sense of duty, and where, though oppressed at every step, by envy, disgust, and disappointment, you are bound to persevere, in obedience to the law of God, and the sober instigation of principle.

The benevolence of the gospel lies in actions. The benevolence of our fictitious writers, in a kind of high-wrought delicacy of feeling and sentiment. The one dissipates all its fervour in sighs and tears, and idle aspirations—the other reserves its strength for efforts and execution. The one regards it as a luxurious enjoyment for the heart—the other, as a work and business for the hand. The one sits in

indolence, and broods, in visionary rapture, over its schemes of ideal philanthropy—the other steps abroad, and enlightens, by its presence, the dark and pestilential hovels of disease. The one wastes away in empty ejaculation—the other gives time and trouble to the work of beneficence—gives education to the orphan—provides clothes for the naked, and lays food on the table of the hungry. The one is indolent and capricious, and often does mischief by the occasional overflowings of a whimsical and ill-directed charity—the other is vigilant and discerning, and takes care lest his distributions be injudicious, and the effort of benevolence be misapplied. The one is soothed with the luxury of feeling, and reclines in easy and indolent satisfaction—the other shakes off the deceitful languor of contemplation and solitude, and delights in a scene of activity. Remember, that virtue, in general, is not to feel, but to do; not merely to conceive a purpose, but to carry that purpose into execution; not merely to be overpowered by the impression of a sentiment, but to practise what it loves, and to imitate what it admires.

To be benevolent in speculation, is often to be selfish in action and in reality. The vanity and the indolence of man delude him into a thousand inconsistencies. He professes to love the name and the semblance of virtue, but the labour of exertion and of self-denial terrifies him from attempting it. The emotions of kindness are delightful to his bosom, but then they are little better than a selfish indulgence—they terminate in his own enjoyment—they are a mere refinement of luxury. His eye melts over the picture of fictitious distress, while not a tear is left

he actual starvation and misery with which he
rounded. It is easy to indulge the imagina-
of a visionary heart in going over a scene of
d affliction, because here there is no sloth to
ome—no avaricious propensity to control—no
ive or disgusting circumstance to allay the un-
ed impression of sympathy which a soft and
t picture is calculated to awaken. It is not
y to be benevolent in action and in reality,
e here there is fatigue to undergo—there is
and money to give—there is the mortifying
acle of vice, and folly, and ingratitude, to en-
er. We like to give you the fair picture of
e man, because to throw over it false and ficti-
embellishments, is injurious to its cause. These
te the fancy by romantic visions which can
be realized. They embitter the heart by the
severe and mortifying disappointments, and
force us to retire in disgust from what heaven
ntended to be the theatre of our discipline and
ration. Take the representation of the Bible.
volence is a work and a labour. It often calls
e severest efforts of vigilance and industry—a
of action not to be acquired in the school of fine
nent, but in the walks of business, in the dark
ismal receptacles of misery—in the hospitals of
e—in the putrid lanes of great cities, where
ty dwells in lank and ragged wretchedness,
zed with pain, faint with hunger, and shiver-
a frail and unsheltered tenement.

u are not to conceive yourself a real lover of
species, and entitled to the praise or the reward
nevolence because you weep over a fictitious

representation of human misery. A man may weep in the indolence of a studious and contemplative retirement; he may breathe all the tender aspirations of humanity; but what avails all this warm and diffusive benevolence, if it is never exerted—if it never rise to execution—if it never carry him to the accomplishment of a single benevolent purpose—if it shrink from activity, and sicken at the pain of fatigue? It is easy, indeed, to come forward with the cant and hypocrisy of fine sentiment—to have a heart trained to the emotions of benevolence, while the hand refuses the labours of discharging its offices—to weep for amusement, and to have nothing to spare for human suffering but the tribute of an indolent and unmeaning sympathy. Many of you must be acquainted with that corruption of Christian doctrine, which has been termed Antinomianism. It professes the highest reverence for the Supreme Being, while it refuses obedience to the lessons of his authority. It professes the highest gratitude for the sufferings of Christ, while it refuses that course of life and action, which he demands of his followers. It professes to adore the tremendous Majesty of heaven, and to weep in shame and in sorrow over the sinfulness of degraded humanity, while every day it insults Heaven by the enormity of its misdeeds, and evinces the insincerity of its wilful perseverance in the practice of iniquity. This Antinomianism is generally condemned; and none reprobate it more than the votaries of fine sentiment—your men of taste and elegant literature—your epicures of feeling, who riot in all the luxury of theatrical emotion, and who, *in their* admiration of what is tender, and beautiful,

ultivated, have always turned with disgust from
octrines of a sour and illiberal theology. We
ay to such, as Nathan to David, "Thou art the
" Theirs is to all intents and purposes Anti-
omism—and an Antinomianism of a far more
erous and deceitful kind, than the Antinomian-
of a spurious and pretended orthodoxy. In the
nomianism of religion, there is nothing to
nate or deceive you. It wears an air of repulsive
ly, more fitted to awaken disgust, than to gain
admiration of proselytes. There is a glaring
anity in its aspect, which alarms you at the very
t, and is an outrage to that natural morality
h, dark and corrupted as it is, is still strong
gh to lift its loud remonstrance against it. But
e Antinomianism of high-wrought sentiment,
e is a deception far more insinuating. It steals
a you under the semblance of virtue. It is sup-
ed by the delusive colouring of imagination and
ry. It has all the graces and embellishments of
ature to recommend it. Vanity is soothed, and
science lulls itself to repose in this dream of feel-
and of indolence.

et us dismiss these lying vanities, and regulate
lives by the truth and soberness of the New Tes-
ent. Benevolence is not in word and in tongue,
in deed and in truth. It is a business with men
hey are, and with human life as drawn by the
gh hand of experience. It is a duty which you
t perform at the call of principle, though there
o voice of eloquence to give splendour to your
rtions, and no music or poetry to lead your wil-
; footsteps through the bowers of enchantment.

It is not the impulse of high and ecstatic emotion. It is an exertion of principle. You must go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you by the gentleness of its murmurs. If you look for the romantic simplicity of fiction, you will be disappointed: but it is your duty to persevere, in spite of every discouragement. Benevolence is not merely a feeling, but a principle; not a dream of rapture for the fancy to indulge in, but a business for the hand to execute.

It must now be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributors of charity—you must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the objects of your benevolent exercises. Will he husband your charity with care, or will he squander it away in idleness and dissipation? Will he satisfy himself with the brutal luxury of the moment, and neglect the supply of his more substantial necessities, or suffer his children to be trained in ignorance and depravity? Will charity corrupt him by laziness? What is his peculiar necessity? Is it the want of health or the want of employment? Is it the pressure of a numerous family? Does he need medicine to administer to the diseases of his children? Does he need fuel or raiment to protect them from the inclemency of winter? Does he need money to satisfy the yearly demands of his landlord, or to purchase books and to pay for the education of his offspring?

To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. You must examine his accounts. You must try to recover those debts which are due to his family. You must try to recover those wages which are detained by the injuries or the rapacity of his master. You must employ your mediation with his superiors. You must represent to them the necessities of his situation. You must solicit their assistance, and awaken their feelings to the tale of his calamity. This is benevolence in its plain, and sober, and substantial reality, though eloquence may have withheld its imagery, and poetry may have denied its graces and its embellishments. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It may be recorded in no earthly documents; but if done under the influence of christian principle—in a word, done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which his disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity.

You have all heard of the division of labour, and I wish you to understand, that the advantage of this principle may be felt as much in the operations of charity, as in the operations of trade and manufactures. The work of beneficence does not lie in the one act of giving money; there must be the act of attendance; there must be the act of inquiry; there must be the act of judicious application. But I can conceive that an individual may be so deficient in the varied experience and attention which a work so extensive demands, that he may retire in disgust and discouragement from the practice of charity altogeth-

er. The institution of a Society, such as this, saves this individual to the cause. It takes upon itself all the subsequent acts in the work and labour of love, and restricts his part to the mere act of giving money. It fills the middle space between the dispensers and the recipients of charity. The habits of many who now hear me, may disqualify them for the work of examination. They may have no time for it; they may live at a distance from the objects; they may neither know how to introduce, nor how to conduct themselves in the management of all the details; their want of practice and of experience may disable them for the work of repelling imposition; they should try to gain the necessary habits; it is right that every individual among us, should each, in his own sphere, consider the poor, and qualify themselves for a judicious and discriminating charity. But, in the mean time, the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, is an instrument ready made to our hands. Avail yourselves of this instrument immediately, as, by the easiest part of the exercise of charity, which is to give money, you carry home to the poor all the benefits of its most difficult exercises. The experience which you want, the members of this laudable Society are in possession of. By the work and observation of years, a stock of practical wisdom is now accumulated among them. They have been long inured to all that is loathsome and discouraging in this good work, and they have nerve, and hardihood, and principle to front it. They are every way qualified to be the carriers of your bounty, for it is a path they have long travelled in. Give the money, and these conscientious men will soon bring it into

contact with the right objects. They know the way through all the obscurities of this metropolis, and they can bring the offerings of your charity to people whom you will never see, and into houses which you will never enter. It is not easy to conceive, far less to compute the extent of human misery; but these men can give you experience for it. They can show you their registers of the sick and of the dying; they are familiar with disease in all its varieties of faintness, and breathlessness, and pain.—Sad union! they are called to witness it in conjunction with poverty; and well do they know that there is an eloquence in the imploring looks of these helpless poor, which no description can set before you. Oh! my brethren, figure to yourselves the calamity in all its soreness, and measure your bounty by the actual greatness of the claims, and not by the feebleness of their advocate.

I have trespassed upon your patience; but, at the hazard of carrying my address to a length that is unusual, I must still say more. Nor would I ever forgive myself if I neglected to set the eternity of the poor in all its importance before you. This is the second point of consideration to which I wish to direct you. The man who considers the poor will give his chief anxiety to the wants of their eternity. It must be evident to all of you that this anxiety is little felt. I do not appeal for the evidence of this to the selfish part of mankind—there we are not to expect it. I go to those who are really benevolent—who have a wish to make others happy, and who take trouble in so doing; and it is a striking observation, how little the salvation of these others is the

object of that benevolence which makes them so amiable. It will be found that in and by far the greater number of instances, this principle is all consumed on the accommodations of time, and the necessities of the body. It is the meat which feeds them—the garment which covers them—the house which shelters them—the money which purchases all things; these, I say, are what form the chief topics of benevolent anxieties. Now, we do not mean to discourage this principle. We cannot afford it; there is too little of it; and it forms too refreshing an exception to that general selfishness which runs throughout the haunts of business and ambition, for us to say any thing against it. We are not cold-blooded enough to refuse our delighted concurrence to an exertion so amiable in its principle, and so pleasing in the warm and comfortable spectacle which it lays before us. The poor, it is true, ought never to forget, that it is to their own industry, and to the wisdom and economy of their own management, that they are to look for the elements of subsistence —that if idleness and prodigality shall lay hold of the mass of our population, no benevolence, however unbounded, can ever repair a mischief so irrecoverable—that if they will not labour for themselves, it is not in the power of the rich to create a sufficiency for them; and that though every heart were opened, and every purse emptied in the cause, it would absolutely go for nothing towards forming a well-fed, a well-lodged, or a well conditioned peasantry. Still, however, there are cases which no foresight could prevent, and no industry could provide for—where the blow falls heavy and unexpected on some devoted

son or daughter of misfortune, and where, though thoughtlessness and folly may have had their share, benevolence, not very nice in its calculations, will feel the overpowering claim of actual, helpless, and imploring misery. Now, I again offer my cheerful testimony to such benevolence as this; I count it delightful to see it singling out its object, and sustaining it against the cruel pressure of age and of indigence; and when I enter a cottage where I see a warmer fire-side, or more substantial provision, than the visible means can account for, I say that the landscape, in all its summer glories, does not offer an object so gratifying, as when referred to the vicinity of the great man's house, and the people who live in it, and am told that I will find my explanation *there*. Kind and amiable people! your benevolence is most lovely in its display, but Oh! it is perishable in its consequences. Does it never occur to you, that in a few years this favourite will die—that he will go to the place where neither cold nor hunger will reach him, but that a mighty interest remains, of which both of us may know the certainty, though neither you nor I can calculate the extent. Your benevolence is too short.—It does not shoot far enough a-head.—It is like regaling a child with a sweetmeat or a toy, and then abandoning the happy, unreflecting infant to exposure. You make the poor old man happy with your crumbs and your fragments, but he is an infant on the mighty range of infinite duration; and will you leave the soul, which has the infinity to go through, to its chance? How comes it that the grave should throw so impenetrable a shroud over the realities of eternity? How comes it that heaven,

and hell, and judgment, should be treated as so many nonentities, and that there should be as little real and operative sympathy felt for the soul, which lives forever, as for the body after it is dead, or for the dust into which it moulders? Eternity is longer than time; the arithmetic, my brethren, is all on one side upon this question; and the wisdom which calculates, and guides itself by calculation, gives its weighty and respectable support to what may be called the benevolence of faith.

Now, if there be one employment more fitted than another to awaken this benevolence, it is the peculiar employment of that Society for which I am now pleading. I would have anticipated such benevolence from the situation they occupy, and the information before the public bears testimony to the fact. The truth is, that the diseases of the body may be looked upon as so many outlets through which the soul finds its way to eternity. Now, it is at these outlets that the members of this Society have stationed themselves. This is the interesting point of survey at which they stand, and from which they command a look of both worlds. They have placed themselves in the avenues which lead from time to eternity, and they have often to witness the awful transition of a soul hovering at the entrance—struggling its way through the valley of the shadow of death, and at last breaking loose from the confines of all that is visible. Do you think it likely that men, with such spectacles before them, will withstand the sense of eternity? No, my brethren, they cannot, they have not. Eternity, I rejoice to announce to you, is not forgotten by them; and with

their care for the diseases of the body, they are neither blind nor indifferent to the fact, that the soul is diseased also. We know it well. There is an indolent and superficial theology, which turns its eyes from the danger, and feels no pressing call for the application of the remedy—which reposes more in its own vague and self-assumed conceptions of the mercy of God, than in the firm and consistent representations of the New Testament—which overlooks the existence of disease altogether, and therefore feels no alarm, and exerts no urgency in the business—which, in the face of all the truths and all the severities that are uttered in the word of God, leaves the soul to its chance; or, in other words, by neglecting to administer every thing specific for the salvation of the soul, leaves it to perish. We do not want to involve you in controversies; we only ask you to open the New Testament and attend to the obvious meaning of a word which occurs frequently in its pages—we mean the word *saved*. The term surely implies, that the present state of the thing to be saved is a lost and an undone state. If a tree be in a healthful state from its infancy, you never apply the term saved to it, though you see its beautiful foliage, its flourishing blossoms, its abundant produce, and its progressive ascent through all the varieties incidental to a sound and a prosperous tree. But if it were diseased in its infancy, and ready to perish, and if it were restored by management and artificial applications, then you would say of this tree that it was *saved;* and the very term implies some previous state of uselessness and corruption. What, then, are we to make of the frequent occur-

rence of this term in the New Testament, as applied to a human being? If men come into this world pure and innocent, and have nothing more to do but to put forth the powers with which nature has endowed them, and so rise through the progressive stages of virtue and excellence, to the rewards of immortality, you would not say of these men that they were saved when they were translated to these rewards. These rewards of man are the natural effects of his obedience, and the term *saved* is not at all applicable to such a supposition. But the God of the Bible says differently. If a man obtain heaven at all, it is by being saved. He is in a diseased state, and it is by the healing application of the blood of the Son of God, that he is restored from that state. The very title applied to him proves the same thing. He is called *our Saviour*. The deliverance, which he effects is called our salvation. The men whom he doth deliver are called the *saved*. Doth not this imply some previous state of disease and helplessness? And from the frequent and incidental occurrence of this term, may we not gather an additional testimony to the truth of what is elsewhere more expressly revealed to us, that we are lost by nature, and that to obtain recovery, we must be found in Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost. He that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved, but he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.

We know that there are some who loathe this representation; but this is just another example of the substantial interests of the poor being sacrificed to mismanagement and delusion. It is to be hoped

that there are many who have looked
fairly in the face, and are ready to re
the remedy adapted to relieve it. We
no call to attend to the spiritual interes
they could safely be left to themselves, i.
spontaneous operation of those powers
it is supposed that nature has endowed
this is not the state of the case. We con. the
world with the princi ies of sin and condemnation
within us; and, in the congenial atmosphere of this
world's example, these ripen fast for the execution
of the sentence. During the period of this short but
interesting passage to another world, the remedy is
in the gospel held out to all, and the freedom and
universality of its inv ons, while it opens assured
admission to all who nust aggravate the weight
and severity of the s ce to those who will not;
and upon them the dreadful energy of that saying
will be accomplished,—"How shall they escape if
they neglect so great a salvation?"

We know part of your labours for the eternity of the poor. We know that you have brought the Bible into contact with many a soul. And we are sure that this is suiting the remedy to the disease; for the Bible contains those words which are the power of God through faith unto salvation, to every one who believes them.

To this established instrument for working faith in the heart, add the instrument of hearing. When you give the Bible, accompany the gift with the living energy of a human voice—let prayer, and advice, and explanation, be brought to act upon them; and let the warm and deeply felt earnestnes

of your hearts, discharge itself upon theirs in the impressive tones of sincerity, and friendship, and good will. This is going substantially to work. It is, if I may use the expression, bringing the right element to bear upon the case before you; and be assured, every treatment of a convinced and guilty mind is superficial and ruinous, which does not lead it to the Saviour, and bring before it his sacrifice and atonement, and the influences of that spirit bestowed through his obedience on all who believe on Him.

While in the full vigour of health, we may count it enough to take up with something short of this. But—striking testimony to evangelical truth! go to the awful reality of a human soul on the eve of its departure from the body, and you will find that all those vapid sentimentalities which partake not of the substantial doctrine of the New Testament, are good for nothing. Hold up your face, my brethren, for the truth and simplicity of the Bible. Be not ashamed of its phraseology. It is the right instrument to handle in the great work of calling a human soul out of darkness into marvellous light. Stand firm and secure on the impregnable principle, that this is the word of God, and that all taste, and imagination, and science, must give way before its overbearing authority. Walk in the footsteps of your Saviour, in the twofold office of caring for the diseases of the body, and administering to the wants of the soul; and though you may fail in the former —though the patient may never arise and walk, yet, by the blessing of Heaven upon your fervent and effectual endeavours, the latter object may be gained

e soul may be lightened of all its anx
e burden of its diseases may be swe
y be of good cheer, because its sins a
d the right direction may be impress
h will carry it forward in progress
ity. Death may not be averted, but d
isarmed. It may be stript of its ter
ad of a devouring enemy, it may be
enger of triumph.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED ON

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 1816;

THE DAY OF NATIONAL THANKSGIVI

FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE.

BY

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS,
Minister of the Tron Church,
GLASGOW.

SERMON.

ISAIAH ii. 4.

all not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

ıE are a great many passages in S
'arrant the expectation that a tim
n end shall be put to war—whe ar
and its cruelties shall be banisl on
he earth—when those restless elements o
n and jealousy which have so long kept the
in a state of unceasing commotion, and are
d anon sending another and another wave
field of this world's politics, shall at length
ed into a placid and ever-during calm; and
nd delightful are the images which the Bible
, as guided by the light of prophecy, it
us forward to those millenial days, when the
f peace shall be established, and the wide
of the gospel, which is confined by no limits,
ns no distinctions, shall embosom the whole
ace within the ample grasp of one harmoni-
universal family.

efore I proceed, let me attempt to do away a
which exists on the subject of prophecy. Its
nts are all certain, say many, and we have
e nothing to do, but to wait for them in pas-

and indolent expectation. The truth c
ds in no dependance on human aid to vi
immutability of all his announcements; a
er of God stands in no need of the feebl
s of man to hasten the accomplishment of
purposes. Let us therefore sit down qui
attitude of spectators—let us leave the D
o his own work in his own way, and ma
progress of a history over which we h
controul, the evolution of his designs, and the
of his wise and beneficent administration.

, it is very true, that the Divinity will
ork in his own way, but if he choose to
y is not without the instrumenta
their instrumentality, might n
sitting down into the mere attitude of spec
turn out to be a most perverse and disobedie
clusion? It is true, that his purpose will obt
fulfilment, whether we shall offer or not to
forward by our co-operation. But if the ob
to be brought about, and if, in virtue of th
sovereignty by which he determined upon the
he has also determined on the way which lead
and that that way shall be by the acting of
principle, and the putting forth of human ex
then let us keep back our co-operation as we
God will raise up the hearts of others to that
we abstain from; and they, admitted into th
honor of being fellow-workers with God, m
homage to the truth of his prophecy, while we
haps, may unconsciously do dreadful homage
truth of another warning, and another pro
"I work a work in your days which you sh

believe, though a man declare it unto y
ye despisers, and wonder and perish."

Now this is the very way in which pr
been actually fulfilled. The return of
Israel to their own land was an event
inspiration, and was brought about by
up of the spirit of Cyrus, who felt hin
with the duty of building a house to Go isa-
lem. The pouring out of the Spirit on the day of
Pentecost was foretold by the Saviour ere he left the
world, and was accomplished upon men wl
bled themselves toget r at the place t
were commanded to repair; and there t
and they prayed. T rapid propagation of
tianity in those days known by the human a
of this propagation, be made sure by the word
prophecy; but the way in which it was actu y
made sure, was by the strenuous exertions, the unex-
ampled heroism, the holy devotedness and zeal of
martyrs, and apostles, and evangelists. And even
now, my brethren, while no professing Christian
can deny that their faith is to be one day the faith
of all countries; but while many of them idly sit
and wait the time of God putting forth some myste-
rious and unheard of agency, to bring about the
universal diffusion, there are men who have betaken
themselves to the obvious expedient of going abroad
among the nations, and teaching them; and though
derided by an undeserving world, they seem to be
the very men pointed out by the Bible, who are
g to and fro increasing the knowledge of its
trines, and who will be the honoured instruments

of carrying into effect the most splendid of all its anticipations.

Now, the same holds true, I apprehend, of the prophecy in my text. The abolition of war will be the effect not of any sudden or resistless visitation from heaven on the character of men—not of any mystical influence working with all the omnipotence of a charm on the passive hearts of those who are the subjects of it—not of any blind or overruling fatality which will come upon the earth at some distant period of its history, and about which, we, of the present day, have nothing to do but to look silently on, without concern, and without co-operation. The prophecy of a peace as universal as the spread of the human race, and as enduring as the moon in the firmament, will meet its accomplishment, ay, and at that very time which is already fixed by Him who seeth the end of all things from the beginning thereof. But it will be brought about by the activity of men. It will be done by the philanthropy of thinking and intelligent Christians. The conversion of the Jews—the spread of gospel light among the regions of idolatry—these are distinct subjects of prophecy, on which the faithful of the land are now acting, and to the fulfilment of which they are giving their zeal and their energy. I conceive the prophecy which relates to the final abolition of war will be taken up in the same manner, and the subject will be brought to the test of christian principle, and many will unite to spread a growing sense of its follies and its enormities, over the countries of the world—and the public will be enlightened not by

the factious and turbulent declamations
but by the mild dissemination of gos
through the land—and the prophecy cont
book will pass into effect and accomplis
other influence than the influence of
lessons on the hearts and consciences of vic
—and the measure will first be carried coun-
try, not by the unhallowed violence of nt,
but by the control of eneral opinion, e ssed on
the part of a people, o, if Christian, in their re-
pugnance to war will e equally Ch ti the
loyalties and subjections. l meek u vir-
tues of the New Test nt—and the
good-will to the chil en of men v read
through all climes, and through all latitudes—
thus by scriptural tru conveyed with power from
one people to anoth r, and taking its ample round
among all the tribes and families of the earth, shall
we arrive at the magnificent result of peace through-
out all its provinces, and security in all its dwelling-
places.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, I shall, first, expatiate a little on the evils of war.

In the second place, I shall direct your attention to the obstacles which stand in the way of its extinction, and which threaten to retard for a time the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration.

And, in the Third place, I shall endeavour to point out, what can only be done at present in a hur-
d superficial manner, some of the expedients
which these obstacles may be done away.

1. I shall expatiate a little on the evils of war. The mere existence of the prophecy in my text, is a sentence of condemnation upon war, and stamps a criminality on its very forehead. So soon as Christianity shall gain a full ascendency in the world, from that moment war is to disappear. We have heard that there is something noble in the art of war; that there is something generous in the ardour of that fine chivalric spirit which kindles in the hour of alarm, and rushes with delight among the thickest scenes of danger and of enterprise;—that man is never more proudly arrayed, than when, elevated by a contempt for death, he puts on his intrepid front, and looks serene, while the arrows of destruction are flying on every side of him;—that expunge war, and you expunge some of the brightest names in the catalogue of human virtue, and demolish that theatre on which have been displayed some of the sublimest energies of the human character. It is thus that war has been invested with a most pernicious splendour, and men have offered to justify it as a blessing and an ornament to society, and attempts have been made to throw a kind of imposing morality around it; and one might almost be reconciled to the whole train of its calamities and its horrors, did he not believe his Bible, and learn from its information, that in the days of perfect righteousness, there will be no war;—that so soon as the character of man has had the last finish of Christian principle thrown over it, from that moment all the instruments of war will be thrown aside, and all its lessons will be forgotten; that therefore what are called the virtues of war, are

no virtues at all, or that a better and a worthier scene will be provided for their exercise; but in short, that at the commencement of that blissful era, when the reign of heaven shall be established, war will take its departure from the world with all the other plagues and atrocities of the species.

But apart altogether from this testimony to the evil of war, let us just take a direct look of it, and see whether we can find its character engraved on the aspect it bears to the eye of an attentive observer. The stoutest heart of this assembly would recoil, were he who owns it, to behold the destruction of a single individual by some deed of violence. Were the man who at this moment stands before you in the full play and energy of health, to be in another moment laid by some deadly aim a lifeless corpse at your feet, there is not one of you who would not prove how strong are the relentings of nature at a spectacle so hideous as death. There are some of you who would be haunted for whole days by the image of horror you had witnessed—who would feel the weight of a most oppressive sensation upon your heart, which nothing but time could wear away—who would be so pursued by it as to be unfit for business or for enjoyment—who would think of it through the day, and it would spread a gloomy disquietude over your waking moments—who would dream of it at night, and it would turn that bed which you courted as a retreat from the torments of an ever-meddling memory, into a scene of restlessness.

But generally the death of violence is not instantaneous, and there is often a sad and dreary interval between its final consummation, and the infliction of

the blow which causes it. The winged messenger of destruction has not found its direct avenue to that spot, where the principle of life is situated—and the soul, finding obstacles to its immediate egress, has to struggle it for hours, ere it can make its weary way through the winding avenues of that tenement, which has been torn open by a brother's hand. O! my brethren, if there be something appalling in the suddenness of death, think not that when gradual in its advances, you will alleviate the horrors of this sickening contemplation, by viewing it in a milder form. O! tell me, if there be any relentings of pity in your bosom, how could you endure it, to behold the agonies of the dying man—as goaded by pain, he grasps the cold ground in convulsive energy, or faint with the loss of blood, his pulse ebbs low, and the gathering paleness spreads itself over his countenance; or wrapping himself round in despair, he can only mark by a few feeble quiverings, that life still lurks and lingers in his lacerated body; or lifting up a faded eye, he casts on you a look of imploring helplessness, for that succour which no sympathy can yield him. It may be painful to dwell on such a representation; but this is the way in which the cause of humanity is served. The eye of the sentimentalist turns away from its sufferings, and he passes by on the other side, lest he hear that pleading voice, which is armed with a tone of remonstrance so vigorous as to disturb him. He cannot bear thus to pause, in imagination, on the distressing picture of one individual, but multiply it ten thousand times; say, how much of all this distress has been heaped together upon a single field; give us

the arithmetic of this accumulated wret
lay it before us with all the accuracy
computation—and strange to tell, not
lifted up among the crowd of eager liste
stand on tiptoe, and catch every sylla
ance, which is read to them out of the registers of death. O! say, what mystic spell is that, which so blinds us to the sufferings of our brethren; which deafens to our ear the voice of bleeding humanity, when it is aggravate 1 by the shriek of dying thousands; which make the very magnitude of the slaughter, throw a s ning disguise over its cruelties, and its horrors; h causes us to eye with indifference, the field crowded with the most revolting abominatio , and arrests that sigh, which each individual woul singly have drawn from us, by the report of th m:) hav , and breathed their last in

I am not saying that the burden of all this criminality rests upon the head of the immediate combatants. It lies somewhere, but who can deny that a soldier may be a Christian, and that from the bloody field on which his body is laid, his soul may wing its ascending way to the shores of a peaceful eternity. But when I think that the Christians, even of the great world, form but a very little flock, and that an army is not a propitious soil for the growth of christian principle—when I think on the character of one such army, that had been led on for years by a ruffian ambition, and been inured to scenes of barbarity, and had gathered a most ferocious hardihood of soul, from the many enterprises of violence to which an unprincipled commander had carried

them—when I follow them to the field of battle, and further think, that on both sides of an exasperated contest—the gentleness of Christianity can have no place in almost any bosom; but that nearly every heart is lighted up with fury, and breathes a vindictive purpose against a brother of the species, I cannot but reckon it among the most fearful of the calamities of war—that while the work of death is thickening along its ranks, so many disembodied spirits should pass into the presence of Him who sitteth upon the throne, in such a posture, and with such a preparation.

I have no time, and assuredly as little taste, for expatiating on a topic so melancholy, nor can I afford at present, to set before you a vivid picture of the other miseries which war carries in its train—how it desolates every country through which it rolls, and spreads violation and alarm among its villages—how, at its approach, every home pours forth its trembling fugitives—how all the rights of property, and all the provisions of justice must give way before its devouring exactions—how, when Sabbath comes, no Sabbath charm comes along with it—and for the sound of the church bell, which wont to spread its music over some fine landscape of nature, and summon rustic worshippers to the house of prayer—nothing is heard but the deathful vollies of the battle, and the maddening outcry of infuriated men—how, as the fruit of victory, an unprincipled licentiousness, which no discipline can restrain, is suffered to walk at large among the people—and all that is pure, and reverend, and holy, in the virtue of families, is cruelly trampled on, and held in the bitterest derision.

Oh! my brethren, were we to pursue
which no pen ever attempts, and no
petuates, we should be tempted to ask
which civilization has done for the ch
species? It has thrown a few paltry e
over the surface of human affairs, and
of society, it has reared the defences
the rights and the property of the in
compose it. But let war, legalized as you may,
ushered into the fiel with all the parade of forms
and manifestos—let this war only have its season,
and be suffered to overleap these artificial defences,
and you will soon s how much of the security of
the commonwealth i e to positive restrictions,
and how little of it is due to a natural sense of justice
among men. I know well, that the plausibilities of
human character, which abound in every modern and
enlightened society, have been mustered up to oppose
the doctrine of the Bible, on the woful depravity of
our race. But out of the history of war, I can
gather for this doctrine the evidence of experiment.
It tells me, that man when left to himself and let
loose among his fellows, to walk after the counsel of
his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes, will
soon discover how thin that tinsel is, which the
boasted hand of civilization has thrown over him.
And we have only to blow the trumpet of war, and
proclaim to man the hour of his opportunity, that
his character may show itself in its essential elements
—and that we may see how many, in this our moral
and enlightened day, would spring forward, as to a
jubilee of delight, and prowl like the wild men of the

woods, amidst scenes of rapacity, and cruelty, and violence.

II. But let me hasten away from this part of the subject, and in the second place, direct your attention to those obstacles which stand in the way of the extinction of war, and which threaten to retard, for a time, the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration.

Is this the time, it may be asked, to complain of obstacles to the extinction of war, when peace has been given to the nations, and we are assembled to celebrate its triumphs? Is this day of high and solemn gratulation, to be turned to such forebodings as these? The whole of Europe is now at rest from the tempest which convulsed it—and a solemn treaty with all its adjustments, and all its guarantees, promises a firm perpetuity to the repose of the world. We have long fought for a happier order of things, and at length we have established it—and the hard-earned bequest, we hand down to posterity as a rich inheritance, won by the labours and the sufferings of the present generation. That gigantic ambition which stalked in triumph over the firmest and the oldest of our monarchies, is now laid—and can never again burst forth from the confinement of its prison-hold to waken a new uproar, and to send forth new troubles over the face of a desolated world.

Now, in reply to this, let it be observed, that every interval of repose is precious; every breathing time from the work of violence is to be rejoiced in by the friends of humanity; every agreement among the powers of the earth, by which a temporary respite

can be gotten from the calamities of war, is so much reclaimed from the amount of those miseries that afflict the world, and of those crimes, the cry of which ascendeth unto heaven, and bringeth down the judgments of God on this dark and rebellious province of his creation. I trust, that on this day, gratitude to Him who alone can still the tumults of the people, will be the sentiment of every heart; and I trust that none who now hear me, will refuse to evince his gratitude to the Author of the New Testament, by their obedience to one of the most distinct and undoubted of its lessons; I mean the lesson of a reverential and submissive loyalty. I cannot pass an impartial eye over this record of God's will, without perceiving the utter repugnance that there is between the spirit of Christianity, and the factious, turbulent, unquenchable, and ever-meddling spirit of political disaffection. I will not compromise by the surrender of a single jot or tittle the integrity of that preceptive code which my Saviour hath left behind him for the obedience of his disciples. I will not detach the very minutest of its features, from the fine picture of morality that Christ hath bequeathed, both by commandment and example, to adorn the nature he condescended to wear—and sure I am that the man who has drunk in the entire spirit of the gospel—who, reposing himself on the faith of its promised immortality, can maintain an elevated calm amid all the fluctuations of this world's interest—whose exclusive ambition it is to be the unexcepted pupil of pure, and spiritual and self-denying Christianity—sure I am that such a man will honour the king and all who are in authority—and be subject unto them

for the sake of conscience—and render unto them all their dues—and not withhold a single fraction of the tribute they impose upon him—and be the best of subjects, just because he is the best of Christians—resisting none of the ordinances of God, and living a quiet and a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

But it gives me pleasure to advance a further testimony in behalf of that government with which it has pleased God, who appointeth to all men the bounds of their habitation, to bless that portion of the globe that we occupy. I count it such a government that I not only owe it the loyalty of my principles—but I also owe it the loyalty of my affections. I could not lightly part with my devotion to that government which the other year opened the door to the Christianization of India—I shall never withhold the tribute of my reverence from that government which put an end to the atrocities of the Slave Trade—I shall never forget the triumph, which, in that proudest day of Britain's glory, the cause of humanity gained within the walls of our enlightened Parliament. Let my right hand forget her cunning, ere I forget that country of my birth, where, in defiance to all the clamours of mercantile alarm, every calculation of interest was given to the wind, and braving every hazard, she nobly resolved to shake off the whole burden of the infamy, which lay upon her. I shall never forget, that how to complete the object in behalf of which she has so honorably led the way, she has walked the whole round of civilized society, and knocked at the door of every government in Europe, and lifted her imploring voice for injured Africa, and pled with the mightiest monarchs of the

world, the cause of her outraged shores, and her distracted families. I can neither shut my heart nor my eyes to the fact, that at this moment she is stretching forth the protection of her naval arm, and shielding, to the uttermost of her vigour, that coast where an inhuman avarice is still plying its guilty devices, and aiming to perpetuate among an unoffending people, a trade of cruelty, with all the horrid train of its terrors and abominations. Were such a government as this to be swept from its base, either by the violence of foreign hostility, or by the hands of her own misled and infatuated children—I should never cease to deplore it as the deadliest interruption, which ever had been given to the interests of human virtue, and to the march of human improvement. O! how it should swell every heart, not with pride, but with gratitude, to think that the land of our fathers, with all the iniquities which abound in it, with all the profligacy, which spreads along our streets, and all the profaneness that is heard among our companies—to think that this our land, overspread as it is with the appalling characters of guilt, is still the securest asylum of worth and liberty—that this is the land, from which the most copious emanations of Christianity are going forth to all the quarters of the world—that this is the land, which teems from one end to the other of it with the most splendid designs and enterprises for the good of the species—that this is the land, where public principle is most felt, and public objects are most prosecuted, and the fine impulse of a public spirit is most ready to carry its generous people beyond the limits of a selfish and contracted patriotism. Yes, and when the heart

of the philanthropist is sinking within him at the gloomy spectacle of those crimes and atrocities, which still deform the history of man, I know not a single earthly expedient more fitted to brighten and sustain him, than to turn his eye to the country in which he lives—and there see the most enlightened government in the world acting as the organ of its most moral and intelligent population.

It is not against the government of my country, therefore, that I direct my observations—but against that nature of man in the infirmities of which we all share, and the evil of which no government can extinguish. We have carried a new political arrangement, and we experience the result of it, a temporary calm—but we have not yet carried our way to the citadel of human passions. The elements of war are hushed for a season—but these elements are not destroyed. They still rankle in many an unsubdued heart—and I am too well taught by the history of the past, and the experience of its restless variations, not to believe that they will burst forth again in thunder over the face of society. No, my brethren, it will only be when diffused and vital Christianity comes upon the earth, that an enduring peace will come along with it. The prophecy of my text will obtain its fulfilment—but not till the fulfilment of the verses which go before it;—not till the influence of the gospel has found its way to the human bosom, and plucked out of it the elementary principles of war;—not till the law of love shall spread its melting and all-subduing efficacy, among the children of one common nature;—not till ambition be dethorned from its mastery over the affections of the inner man;

—not till the guilty splendours of war shall cease to captivate its admirers, and spread the blaze of a deceitful heroism over the wholesale butchery of the species;—not till national pride be humbled, and man shall learn, that if it be individually the duty of each of us in honour to prefer one another; then let these individuals combine as they may, and form societies as numerous and extensive as they may, and each of these be swelled out to the dimensions of an empire, still, that mutual condescension and forbearance remain the unalterable christian duties of these empires to each other;—not till man learn to revere his brother as man, whatever portion of the globe he occupies, and all the jealousies and preferences of a contracted patriotism be given to the wind;—not till war shall cease to be prosecuted as a trade, and the charm of all that interest which is linked with its continuance, shall cease to beguile men in the peaceful walks of merchandise, into a barbarous longing after war;—not in one word till pride, and jealousy, and interest, and all that is opposite to the law of God and the charity of the gospel, shall be forever eradicated from the character of those who possess an effectual control over the public and political movements of the species;—not till all this be brought about, and there is not another agent in the whole compass of nature that can bring it about but the gospel of Christ, carried home by the all-subduing power of the Spirit to the consciences of men;—then, and not till then, my brethren, will peace come to take up its perennial abode with us, and its blessed advent on earth be hailed by one shout of joyful acclamation throughout all its families;—then, and

not till then, will the sacred principle of good-will to men circulate as free as the air of heaven among all countries—and the sun looking out from the firmament, will behold one fine aspect of harmony throughout the wide extent of a regenerated world.

It will only be in the last days, "when it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it: And many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people;" then and not till then, "they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The above rapid sketch glances at the chief obstacles to the extinction of war, and in what remains of this discourse, I shall dwell a little more particularly on as many of them as my time will allow me, finding it impossible to exhaust so wide a topic, within the limits of the public services of one day.

The first great obstacle then to the extinction of war, is the way in which the heart of man is carried off from its barbarities and its horrors, by the splendour of its deceitful accompaniments. There is a feeling of the sublime in contemplating the shock of armies, just as there is in contemplating the devour*ing* energy of a tempest, and this so elevates and

engrosses the whole man, that his eye is blind to the tears of bereaved parents, and his ear is deaf to the piteous moan of the dying, and the shriek of their desolated families. There is a gracefulness in the picture of a youthful warrior burning for distinction on the field, and lured by this generous aspiration to the deepest of the animated throng, where, in the fell work of death, the opposing sons of valour struggle for a remembrance and a name; and this side of the picture is so much the exclusive object of our regard, as to disguise from our view the mangled carcasses of the fallen, and the writhing agonies of the hundreds and the hundreds more who have been laid on the cold ground, where they are left to languish and to die. There no eye pities them. No sister is there to weep over them. There no gentle hand is present to ease the dying posture, or bind up the wounds, which, in the maddening fury of the combat, have been given and received by the children of one common father. There death spreads its pale ensigns over every countenance, and when night comes on, and darkness around them, how many a despairing wretch must take up with the bloody field as the untended bed of his last sufferings, without one friend to bear the message of tenderness to his distant home, without one companion to close his eyes.

I avow it. On every side of me I see causes at work which go to spread a most delusive colouring over war, and to remove its shocking barbarities to the back ground of our contemplations altogether. I see it in the history which tells me of the superb appearance of the troops, and the brilliancy of their successive charges. I see it in the poetry which lends

the magic of its numbers to the narrative of blood, and transports its many admirers, as by its images, and its figures, and its nodding plumes of chivalry, it throws its treacherous embellishments over a scene of legalized slaughter. I see it in the music which represents the progress of the battle; and where, after being inspired by the trumpet-notes of preparation, the whole beauty and tenderness of a drawing-room are seen to bend over the sentimental entertainment; nor do I hear the utterance of a single sigh to interrupt the death-tones of the thickening contest, and the moans of the wounded men as they fade away upon the ear, and sink into lifeless silence. All, all goes to prove what strange and half-sighted creatures we are. Were it not so, war could never have been seen in any other aspect than that of unmingled hatefulness; and I can look to nothing but to the progress of Christian sentiment upon earth, to arrest the strong current of its popular and prevailing partiality for war. Then only will an imperious sense of duty lay the check of severe principle, on all the subordinate tastes and faculties of our nature. Then will glory be reduced to its right estimate, and the wakeful benevolence of the gospel chasing away every spell, will be turned by the treachery of no delusion whatever, from its simple but sublime enterprises for the good of the species. Then the reign of truth and quietness will be ushered into the world, and war, cruel, atrocious, unrelenting war, will be stript of its many and its bewildering fascinations.

But again, another obstacle to the extinction of war is a sentiment which seems to be universally

gone into, that the rules and promises of the gospel which apply to a single individual, do not apply to a nation of individuals. Just think of the mighty effect it would have on the politics of the world, were this sentiment to be practically deposed from its wonted authority over the counsels and the doings of nations, in their transactions with each other. If forbearance be the virtue of an individual, forbearance is also the virtue of a nation. If it be incumbent on men in honour to prefer each other, it is incumbent on the very largest societies of men, through the constituted organ of their government to do the same. If it be the glory of a man to defer his anger, and to pass over a transgression, that nation mistakes its glory which is so feelingly alive to the slightest insult, and musters up its threats and its armaments upon the faintest shadow of a provocation. If it be the magnanimity of an injured man to abstain from vengeance, and if by so doing, he heap coals of fire upon the head of his enemy, then that is the magnanimous nation, which, recoiling from violence and from blood, will do no more than send its christian embassy, and prefer its mild and impressive remonstrance; and that is the disgraced nation which will refuse the impressiveness of the moral appeal that has been made to it.—O! my brethren, there must be the breathing of a different spirit to circulate round the globe, ere its christianized nations resign the jealousies which now front them to each other in the scowling attitude of defiance; and much is to do with the people of every land, ere the prophesied influence of the gospel shall bring its virtuous, and its

pacifying control to bear with effect on the counsels and governments of the world.

I find that I must be drawing to a close, and that I must forbear entering into several topics on which I meant at one time to expatiate. I wished, in particular, to have laid it fully before you how the extinction of war, though it should withdraw one of those scenes on which man earns the glory of intrepidity; yet it would leave other, and better, and nobler scenes, for the display and the exercise of this respectable attribute. I wished also to explain to you, that however much I admired the general spirit of Quakerism, on the subject of war; yet that I was not prepared to go all the length of its principles, when that war was strictly defensive. It strikes me, that war is to be abolished by the abolition of its aggressive spirit among the different nations of the world. The text seems to tell me that this is the order of prophecy upon the subject; and that it is when nation shall cease to lift up its sword against nation; or, in other words, when one nation shall cease to move, for the purpose of attacking another, that military science will be no longer in demand, and that the people of the earth will learn the art of war no more. I should also have stated, that on this ground, I refrained from pronouncing on the justice or necessity of any one war in which this country has ever been involved. I have no doubt that many of those who supported our former wars, looked on several of them as wars for existence; but on this matter I carefully abstain from the utterance of a single sentiment; for in so doing, I should feel myself to be

descending from the generalities of christian principle, and employing that pulpit as the vehicle of a questionable policy, which ought never to be prostitated either to the unworthy object of sending forth the incense of human flattery to any one administration, or of regaling the factious, and turbulent and disloyal passions of any party. I should next, if I had time, offer such observations as were suggested by my own views of political science, on the multitude of vulnerable points by which this country is surrounded, in the shape of numerous and distant dependencies, and which however much they may tend to foster the warlike politics of our government, are, in truth, so little worth the expense of a war, that should all of them be wrested away from us, they would leave the people of our empire as great, and as wealthy, and as competent to every purpose of home security as ever. Lastly, I might have whispered my inclination, for a little more of the Chinese policy being imported into Europe, not for the purpose of restraining a liberal intercourse between its different countries, but for the purpose of quieting in each its restless spirit of alarm, about every foreign movement in the politics and designs of other nations; because, sure I am, that were each great empire of the world to lay it down as the maxim of its most scrupulous observance, not to meddle till it was meddled with, each would feel in such a maxim both its safety and its triumph;—for such are the mighty resources of defensive war, that though the whole transportable force of Europe were to land upon our borders, the result of the experiment would be such, that it should never be repeated—

the rallying population of Britain could sweep them all from the face of its territory, and a whole myriad of invaders would melt away under the power of such a government as ours, trenched behind the loyalty of her defenders, and strong, as she deserves to be, in the love and in the confidence of all her children.

I would not have touched on any of the lessons of political economy, did they not lead me, by a single step, to a christian lesson, which I count it my incumbent duty to press upon the attention of you all. Any sudden change in the state of the demand, must throw the commercial world into a temporary derangement. And whether the change be from war to peace, or from peace to war, this effect is sure to accompany it. Now for upwards of twenty years, the direction of our trade has been accommodated to a war system, and when this system is put an end to, I do not say what amount of the distress will light upon this neighbourhood, but we may be sure that all the alarm of falling markets, and ruined speculation, will spread an impressive gloom over many of the manufacturing districts of the land. Now, let my title to addres you on other grounds, be as questionable as it may, I feel no hesitation whatever in announcing it, as your most imperative duty, that no outcry of impatience or discontent from you, shall embarrass the pacific policy of his majesty's government. They have conferred a great blessing on the country, in conferring on it peace, and it is your part resignedly to weather the languid or disastrous months which may come along with it. The interest of trade is an old argument that has been set up in resistance to the dearest and most substantial

interests of humanity. When Paul wanted to bring Christianity into Ephesus, he raised a storm of opposition around him, from a quarter which, I dare say, he was not counting on. There happened to be some shrine manufactories in that place, and as the success of the Apostle would infallibly have reduced the demand for that article, forth came the decisive argument of, Sirs, by this craft we have our wealth, and should this Paul turn away the people from the worship of gods made with hands, thereby much damage would accrue to our trade. Why, my brethren, if this argument is to be admitted, there is not one conceivable benefit that can be offered for the acceptance of the species. Would it not be well if all the men of reading in the country were to be diverted from the poison which lurks in many a mischievous publication—and should this blessed reformation be effected, are there none to be found who would feel that much damage had accrued to their trade? Would it not be well, if those wretched sons of pleasure, before whom if they repent not, there lieth all the dreariness of an unprovided eternity—would it not be well, that they were reclaimed from the maddening intoxication which speeds them on in the career of disobedience—and on this event too, would there be none to complain that much damage had accrued to their trade? Is it not well, that the infamy of the slave trade has been swept from the page of British history? and yet do not many of you remember how long the measure lay suspended, and that about twenty annual flotillas burdened with the load of human wretchedness, were wafted across the Atlantic, while Parliament was *deafened and overborne* by unceasing clamours about

the much damage that would accrue to the trade? And now, is it not well that peace has once more been given to the nations? and are you to follow up this goodly train of examples, by a single whisper of discontent about the much damage that will accrue to your trade? No, my brethren, I will not let down a single inch of the christian requirement that lies upon you. Should a sweeping tide of bankruptcy set in upon the land, and reduce every individual who now hears me, to the very humblest condition in society, God stands pledged to give food and raiment to all who depend upon him;—and it is not fair to make others bleed, that you may roll in affluence;—it is not fair to desolate thousands of families, that yours may be upheld in luxury and splendour—and your best, and noblest, and kindest part is, to throw yourself on the promises of God, and he will hide you and your little ones in the secret of his pavilion till these calamities be overpast.

III. I trust it is evident from all that has been said, how it is only by the extension of christian principle among the people of the earth, that the atrocities of war will at length be swept away from it; and that each of us is hastening the commencement of that blissful period, who, in his own sphere, in doing all that in him lies to bring his own heart, and the hearts of others, under the supreme influence of this principle. It is public opinion, which, in the long run governs the world; and while I look with confidence to a gradual revolution in the state of public opinion from the omnipotence of gospel truth working its silent, but effectual way, through the families of mankind—yet I will not deny, that much may be done to accelerate the advent of perpetual

and universal peace, by a distinct body of men embarking their every talent, and their every acquirement in the prosecution of this, as a distinct object. This was the way in which, a few years ago, the British public were gained over to the cause of Africa. This is the way in which some of the other prophecies of the Bible are at this moment hastening to their accomplishment; and it is in this way, I apprehend, that the prophecy of my text may be indebted for its speedier fulfilment to the agency of men selecting this as the assigned field on which their philanthropy shall expatiate. Were each individual member of such a scheme to prosecute his own walk, and come forward with his own peculiar contribution, the fruit of the united labours of all would be one of the finest collections of christian eloquence, and of enlightened morals, and of sound political philosophy, that ever was presented to the world. I could not fasten on another cause more fitted to call forth such a variety of talent, and to rally around it so many of the generous and accomplished sons of humanity, and to give each of them a devotedness and a power far beyond whatever could be sent into the hearts of enthusiasts, by the mere impulse of literary ambition.

Let one take up the question of war in its principle, and make the fell weight of his moral severity rest upon it, and upon all its abominations. Let another take up the question of war in its consequences, and bring his every power of graphical description to the task of presenting an awakened public with an impressive detail of its cruelties and its horrors. Let another neutralize the poetry of war, and dismantle it of all those bewitching splen-

dours, which the hand of misguided genius has thrown over it. Let another teach the world a truer, and more magnanimous path to national glory, than any country of the world has yet walked in. Let another tell with irresistible argument, how the christian ethics of a nation is at one with the christian ethics of its humblest individual. Let another bring all the resources of his political science to unfold the vast energies of defensive war, and show, that instead of that ceaseless jealousy and disquietude, which are ever keeping alive the flame of hostility among the nations, each may wait in prepared security, till the first footstep of an invader shall be the signal for mustering around the standard of its outraged rights, all the steel, and spirit, and patriotism of the country. Let another pour the light of modern speculation into the mysteries of trade, and prove that not a single war has been undertaken for any of its objects, where the millions and the millions more which were lavished on the cause, have not all been cheated away from us by the phantom of an imaginary interest. This may look to many like the Utopianism of a romantic anticipation—but I shall never despair of the cause of truth addressed to a christian public, when the clear light of principle can be brought to every one of its positions, and when its practical and conclusive establishment forms one of the most distinct of Heaven's prophecies—"that men shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn the art of war any more."

THE DUTY OF GIVING AN IMMEDIATE DILIGENCE TO THE BUSINESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BEING AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF

THE PARISH OF KILMANY.

BY

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS,
Minister of the Tron Church,
GLASGOW.

ADDRESS.

When one writes a letter to an intimate and a much loved friend, he never thinks of the graces of the composition. He unbosoms himself in a style of perfect freeness and simplicity. He gives way to the kindly affections of his heart, and though there may be many touches of t nderness in his performance, it is not because he aims at touches of any kind, but because all the tenderness that is written, is the genuine and the artless transcript of all the tenderness that is felt. Now conceive for a moment, that wrote his letter under the consciousness that it v to be broadly exhibited before the eye of the public, this would immediately operate as a heavy restraint upon him. A man would much rather pour the expression of his friendship into the private ear of him who was the object of it, than he would do it under the full stare of a numerous company. And I, my brethren, could my time have allowed it, would much rather have written my earnest and longing aspiration for the welfare of you all by a private letter to each individual, than by this general Address, which necessarily exposes to the wide theatre of the public all that I feel, and all that I utter on the subject of my affectionate regard for you.

It were better then for the exercise to which I have now set myself, that I shut out all idea of the public;

and never, within the whole recollection of my life, was I less disposed to foster that idea. It may be observed, that the blow of some great and calamitous visitation brings a kind of insensibility along with it. I ought not to lament my withdrawment from you as a calamity, but it has had all the effect of a calamity upon me. I am removed from those objects which habitually interested my heart, and, for a time, it refuses to be interested in other objects. I am placed at a distance from that scene to which I was most alive, and I feel a deadness to every other scene. The people who are now around me, carry an unquestionable kindness in their bosoms, and vie with one another in the expression of it. I can easily perceive that there exists abundantly among them all the constituents of a highly interesting neighbourhood, and it may look cold and ungrateful in me that I am not interested. But it takes a time before the heart can attune itself to the varieties of a new situation. It is ever recurring to the more familiar scenes of other days. The present ministers no enjoyment, and in looking to the past the painful circumstance is, that while the fancy will not be kept from straying to that neighbourhood which exercises over it all the power of a much-loved home, the idea that it is home no longer comes with dread reality upon the mind, and turns the whole to bitterness.

With a heart thus occupied, I do not feel that the admission of the public into our conference will be any great restraint upon me. I shall speak to you as if they were not present, and I do not conceive that they can take a great interest in what I say, because I have no time for the full and explicit state-

ment of principles. I have this advantage with you that I do not have with others, that with you I can afford to be less explicit. I presume upon your recollections of what I have, for some time, been in the habit of addressing to you, and flatter myself that you may enter into a train of observation which to others may appear dark, and abrupt, and unconnected. In penning this short Address, I follow the impulse of my regard for you. You will receive it with indulgence, as a memorial from one who loves you; who is ever with you in heart, though not in person; who classes among the dearest of his recollections, the tranquil enjoyments he has had in your neighbourhood; who carries upon his memory the faithful image of its fields and of its families; and whose prayer for you all is, that you may so grow in the fruits of our common faith, as to be made meet for that unfading inheritance where sorrow and separation are alike unknown.

Were I to sit down for the purpose of drawing out a list of all the actions which may be called sinful, it would be long before I could complete the enumeration. Nay, I can conceive, that by adding one peculiarity after another, the variety may be so lengthened out as to make the attempt impossible. Lying, and stealing, and breaking the Sabbath, and speaking evil one of another, these are all so many sinful actions; but circumstances may be conceived which make one kind of lying different from another, and one kind of theft different from another, and one kind of evil speaking different from another, and in this way the number of sinful actions may be greatly swelled out; and should we attempt to take the

amount, they may be like the host which no man could number, and every sinner, realizing one of these varieties, may wear his own peculiar complexion, and have a something about him, which marks him out, and signalizes him from all the other sinners by whom he is surrounded.

Yet, amid all this variety of visible aspect, there is one summary expression to which all sin may be reduced. There is one principle which, if it always existed in the heart, and were always acted upon in the life, would entirely destroy the existence of sin, and the very essence of sin lies in the want of this one principle. Sin is a want of conformity to the will of God; and were a desire to do the will of God at all times the overruling principle of the heart and conduct, there would be no sin. It is this want of homage to him and to his authority, which gives to sin its essential character. The evil things coming out of the heart, which is the residence of this evil principle, may be exceedingly various, and may impart a very different complexion to different individuals. This complexion may be more or less displeasing to the outward eye. The evil speaker may look to us more hateful than the voluptuary, the man of cruelty than the man of profaneness, the breaker of his word than the breaker of the Sabbath. I believe it will generally be found, that the sin which inflicts the more visible and immediate harm upon men, is, in the eye of men the more hateful sin. There is a readiness to execrate falsehood, and calumny, and oppression; and along with this readiness there is an indulgence for the good-humoured failings of him who is the slave of luxury, and makes

a god of his pleasure, and spends his days in all the thoughtlessness of one who walks in the counsel of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes, provided that his love of society leads him to share with others the enjoyment of all these gratifications, and his wealth enables him, and his moral honesty inclines him, to defray the expense of them.

Behold, then, one frequent source of delusion. He whose sins are less hateful to the world than those of others, wraps up himself in a kind of security. I wrong no man. I have a heart that can be moved by the impulses of compassion. I carry in my bosom actively sentiment of indignation at the tale of perfidy or violence; and surely I may feel a satisfaction which others have no title to feel, who are guilty of those from which my nature recoils with a generous abhorrence. He forgets all the while, that sin, in its essential character, may have as full and firm a possession of his heart, as of the man's with whom he is comparing himself; that there may be an entire disownal and forgetfulness of God; that not one particle of reverence, or of acknowledgment, may be given to the Being with whom he has to do; that whatever he may be in the eye of his neighbour, in the eye of him who seeth not as man seeth, he is guilty; that, walking just as he would have done though there had been no divine government whatever, he is a rebel to that government; and that amid all the complacency of his own feelings, and all the applause and good liking of his acquaintances, he wears all the deformity of rebelliousness in the eye of every spiritual being, who looks at the state of his heart, and passes judgment upon him by those very

principles which are to try him at the great day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open.

If this were kept in view, it would lead to a more enlightened estimate of the character of man, than man in the thoughtlessness and unconcern of his natural state ever forms. It would lead us to see, that under all the hues and varieties of character, diversified as they are by constitutional taste, and the power of circumstances, there lurks one deep and universal disease, and that is the disease of a mind labouring under alienation from God, and without any practical sense of what is due to him. You will all admit it to be true, that the heart of a man may be under the full operation of this deadly poison, while the man himself has a constitutional taste for the pleasures of social intercourse. You see nothing unlikely or impossible in this combination. Now I want you to go along with me, when I carry my assertion still further; and sure I am that experience bears me out when I say, that the heart of a man may be under the full operation of a dislike or indifference to God, while the man himself has a constitutional abhorrence at cruelty, a constitutional repugnance to fraud, a constitutional antipathy to what is uncourteous in manners, or harsh and unfeeling in conversation, a constitutional gentleness of character; or, to sum up the whole in one clause, a man may be free from many things which give him a moral hatefulness in the eye of others, and he may have many things which throw a moral loveliness around him, and the soul be under the entire dominion of that carelessness about God, which gives to sin its essential character. And upon him, even

upon him, graceful and engaging as he may be by the lustre of his many accomplishments, the saying of the Bible does not fail of being realised, that, "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

And thus it is, that our great and ultimate aim in the reformation of a sinner, is the reformation of his heart. There may be many reformations short of this, and in which many are disposed to rest with deceitful complacency. I can conceive, that the man who formerly stole may steal no more, not because he is now sanctified, and feels the obligation of religious principle, but because he is now translated into better circumstances, and by the power of example, has contracted that tone of honourable feeling which exists among the upper classes of society. Here, then, is a reformation of the conduct, while the heart, in respect of that which constitutes its exceeding sinfulness, is no better than before. The old leaven of ungodliness may overspread its every desire, and its every affection; and while the outer man has been washed of one of its visible deformities, the inner man may still persist in its unmindfulness of God; and the pollution of this greatest and vilest of all moral turpitude, may adhere to it as obstinately as ever.

Now it appears to me, that these views, true in themselves, and deserving to be carried along with us through every inch of our religious progress, have often been practically misapplied. I can conceive an inquirer under the influence of these views, to fall into such a process of reflection as the following:

'If the outer conduct be of no estimation in the sight of God, unless it stand connected with the actings of a holy principle in the heart, let us begin with the heart, and from the establishment of a holy principle there, purity of conduct will follow as an effect of course. Let us beware of laying an early stress upon the doings of the outer man, lest we and others should have our eye turned from the reformation of the inner man, as the main and almost the exclusive object of a Christian's ambition. Let us be fearful how we urge such and such visible reformations, either upon ourselves or those around us, lest they be made to stand in the place of that grand renewing process, by which the soul, dead in trespasses and sins, is made alive unto God. Let us labour to impress the necessity of this process, and seeing the utter inability of man to change his own heart, let us turn his eye from any exertions of his own, to that fulness which is in Christ Jesus, through whom alone he can obtain the forgiveness of all his sins, and such a measure of power resting upon him, as carries along with it all the purifying influences of a spiritual reformation. In the mean time, let us take care how we speak about good works. Let the very mention of them put us into the defensive attitude of coldness and suspicion; and instead of giving our earnestness or our energy to them, let us press upon ourselves and others the exercises of that faith, by which alone we are made the workmanship of God, and created unto such good works as he hath ordained that we should walk in them.'

Now there is a great deal of truth throughout the

whole of this train of sentiment; but truth contemplated under such an aspect, and turned to such a purpose, as has the effect of putting an inquirer into a practical attitude, which appears to me to be unscriptural and wrong. I would not have him keep his hand for a single moment from the doing of that which is obviously right. I would not have him to refrain from grappling immediately with every one sin which is within the reach of his exertions. I would not have him to incur the delay of one instant in ceasing to do that which is evil; and I conceive that it is not till this is begun that he will learn to do that which is well. It ought not to restrain the energy of his immediate doing that he is told how doings are of no account, unless they are the doings of one who has gone through a previous regeneration. This ought not to keep him from doing. It should only lead him to combine with the prescribed doing, an earnest aspiring after a cleaner heart, and a better spirit than he yet finds himself to have. It is very true, that a man may do an outwardly good thing, and rest in what he has done. But it is as true, that a man may do the outwardly good thing he is bidden do, and, instead of resting, may look forward with diligent striving, and earnest, humble prayer, to some greater things than this. Now this last my brethren, is the attitude I want to put you into. Let the thief give up his stealing at this moment. Let the drunkard give up his intemperance. Let the evil speaker give up his calumnies. Let the doer of all that is obviously wrong, break off his sins, and turn him to the doing of all that is obviously right. Let no one thing, not even the speculations

r,* be suffered to stand a barrier against
e into the field of immediate exertion.
he very first blow of my trumpet against
le iniquities which I see to be in you, and
e be any one obviously right thing you have
neglected, I will not consume one particle
before I call upon you to do it.
e in vain to say that all this is not called
w my strength and your
in ting an error which has no practical
istence. You must be quite familiarised with the
lancholy spectacle of a zealous professor mour-
over the sinfulness of his heart, and, at the same
putting forth his hand, without one sigh of
rse, to what is sinful in ordinary conduct.
Have you never witnessed one, who could speak evil of his neighbour, and was at the same time trenched among what he thought the speculations of orthodoxy, and made the utter corruption of the soul of man one of these speculations? Is it not enough to say that he is a mere speculative Christian? for the very same thing may be detected in the practice of one who feels a real longing to be delivered from the power of that sin, which he grieves has such an entire dominion over him. And yet, strange to tell, there is many an obvious and every-day sin, which is not watched against, which is not struggled against, and the commission of which gives no uneasiness what-

* Sorry should I be, if a term expressive of right notions on the most interesting of all subjects, were used by me with a levity at all calculated to beget an indifference to the soundness of your religious opinions, or to divert your most earnest attention from those inquiries, which have for their object the true will, and the true way of God for the salvation of men.

r. The man is as it were so much occupied with sinfulness of his heart, that he neither feels nor ends to the sinfulness of his conduct. He wants go methodically to work. He wants to begin at beginning, and he forms his estimate of what the ginning is upon the arrangements of human specu- ions. It sounds very plausibly, that as out of the rt are the issues of life, the work of an inquiring istian must begin there; but the mischief I plain of is, that in the first prosecution of this k, months or years may be consumed ere the rified fountain send forth its streams, or the stance he is aspiring after tell on the plain and ble doings of his ordinary conduct. Hence, my hren, the mortifying exhibition of great zeal, and ch talk, and diligent canvassing and conversing t the abstract principles of the christian faith, bined with what is visible in the christian prac- e, being at a dead stand, and not one inch of sen- le progress being made in any one thing which the e can witness, or the hand can lay a tangible hold on. The man is otherwise employed. He is busy th the first principles of the subject. He still goes with his wonted peevishness within doors, and wonted dishonesties without doors. He has not t come to these matters. He is taken up with ring and labouring at the foundation. The heart the great subject of his anxiety; and in the busy ercise of mourning, and confessing, and praying, d studying the right management of his heart, he y take up months or years before he come to the formities of his outward and ordinary conduct. I ll venture to go farther, my brethren, and assert,

that if this be the track he is on, it will be a great chance if he ever come to them at all. To the end of his days he may be a talking, and inquiring, and speculating, and I doubt not along with all this, a church-going and ordinance-loving christian. But I am much afraid that he is, practically speaking, not in the way to the solid attainments of a Christian, whose light shines before men. All that meets the eye of daily observers may have undergone no change whatever, and the life of the poor man may be nothing better than the dream of a delusive and bewildering speculation.

Now, it is very true that, agreeably to the remarks with which I prefaced this argument, the great and ultimate aim of all reformation is to reform the heart, and to bring it into such a state of principle and desire, that God may be glorified in soul and in spirit as well as in body. This is the point that is ever to be sought after, and ever to be pressed forward to. Under a sense of his deficiencies from this point, a true Christian will read diligently that he may learn the gospel method of arriving at it. He will pray diligently that the clean heart may be created, and the right spirit may be renewed within him. The earnestness of his attention to this matter will shut him up more and more into the faith of that perfect sacrifice, which his short-comings from a holy and heart-searching law will ever remind him of, as the firm and the only ground of his acceptance with God. The same honest reliance on the divine testimony, which leads him to close with the doctrine of the atonement, and to rejoice in it, will also lead him to close with the doctrine of sanctification, and

diligently to aspire after it. Now, in the business of so aspiring after this object, it is not enough that he read diligently in the Word; it is not enough that he pray diligently for the Spirit. These are two ingredients in the business of seeking after his object, but they are not the only ones; and what I lament is, that a fear about the entireness of his orthodoxy leads many a zealous inquirer to look shifty and askance at another ingredient in this business. He should not only read diligently and pray diligently, but he should do diligently every the right thing that is within his reach, and that he finds himself to have strength for. Any one author who talks of the insignificance of doings, in such a way as practically to restrain an inquirer from vigorously and immediately entering upon the performance of them, misleads that inquirer from the scriptural method, by which we are directed to a greater measure of light and of holiness than we are yet in possession of. He detaches one essential ingredient from the business of seeking. He may set the spirit of his reader a roaming over some field of airy speculation; but he works no such salutary effect upon his spirit, as evinces itself by any one visible or substantial reformation. I have often and often attempted to press this lesson upon you, my brethren; and I bear you testimony, that while a resistance to practical preaching has been imputed to the zealous professors of orthodoxy, you listened with patience, and I trust not without fruit, when addressing you as if you had just begun to stir yourselves in the matter of your salvation. I ranked it among my preliminary instructions, that you should cease from

f your doings; that you should give up all
ou know to be wrong in your ordinary con-
that the thief should restrain himself from
n , the liar from falsehood, the evil speaker
backbiting, the slothful labourer in the field
n eye-service, the faithless housemaid in the fam-
m all purloining and all idleness.

rfuges of hypocrisy are endless; and if
a n o heology, it will be as
m rter a from any other. Some
are who deafen the impression of all these direct
mmediate admonitions, by saying that before all
th ings are insisted on, we must lay well and labor
ll at the foundation of faith in Christ, without whom
n do nothing. The truth, that without Christ
we can do nothing, is unquestionable; but it would
take many a paragraph to expose its want of appli-
cation to the use that is thus made of it. But to cut
short this plea of indolence for delaying the painful
work of surrendering all that is vicious in conduct;
let me put it to your common sense whether a thief
would not, and could not give up stealing for a week,
if he had the reward of a fortune waiting him at the
end of it; whether, upon the same reward, an evil
speaker could not, for the same time, impose a re-
straint upon his lips, and the slothful servant become
a most pains-taking and diligent worker, and the
liar maintain an undeviating truth throughout all
his conversations. Each of these would find him-
self to have strength for these things, were the in-
ducement of a certain temporal reward held out, or
the dread of a certain temporal punishment were
made to hang over him. Now, for the temporal

punishment, I substitute the call of, "Flee from the coming wrath." Let this call have the effect it should have, and the effect it actually does have, on many who are not warped by a misleading speculation, and it will make them stir up such strength as they possess, and give up, in deed, much of their actual misconduct. This effect it had in the days of John the Baptist. People on his call, gave up their violence and their extortions, and the evil of many of their doings, and were thus put into what God in his wisdom counted a fit state of preparation for the Saviour. If there was any thing in the revelation of the Gospel calculated to supersede this call of, "Flee from the evil of your doings," then I could understand the indifference, or the positive hostility, of zealous pretenders to the work of addressing practical exhortation to inquirers at the very outset of their progress. But so far from being superseded by any thing that the Gospel lays before us, the Author and the first preachers of the Gospel just took up the lesson of John, and at the very commencement of their ministry did they urge it upon people to turn them from the evil of their doings. Repent and believe the Gospel, says our Saviour. Repent and turn unto God, and do works meet for repentance, says the apostle Paul. And there must be something wrong, my brethren, if you resist me urging it upon you, to give up at this moment, even though it should be the first moment of your concern about salvation, to give up all that is obviously wrong; to turn you to all that is obviously right; to grapple with every sin you can lay your hand upon; and if it be true, in point of experience and

common sense, that many a misdeed may be put away from you on the allurement of some temporal reward; then if you have faith in the reality of eternal things, the hope of an escape from the coming wrath may and will tell immediately upon you, and we shall see among you a stir, and a diligence, and a doing, and a visible reformation.

It is a great matter to chase away all mysticism from the path by which a sinner is led unto God; and it is to be lamented that many a speculation of many a respected divine, has the effect of throwing a darkening cloud of perplexity over the very entrance of this path. I tell you a very plain thing, and, if it be true, it is surely of importance that you should know it, when I tell you, that if you are a servant, and are visited with a desire after salvation, then a faithful performance of your daily task is a step without which the object you aim at is unattainable. If you are a son, a more punctual fulfilment of your parent's bidding is another step. If you are a neighbour, a more civil and obliging deportment to those around you is another step. If you are a dealer, the adoption of a just weight and a just measure is another step. There are some who, afraid of your attempting to get acceptance with God by the merit of your own doings, would not venture to urge all this at the outset, lest they should lead you to rest on a delusive ground of confidence. They would try to get a perfect and a clear understanding of the right ground of acceptance established, *previous* to the use of any such urgency; and then, upon this principle being well laid within you, they might take *the liberty* of telling you your duty. Their fearful-

ness upon this point forms a very striking contrast to the free, and unembarrassed, and energetic manner in which the Bible, both of the Old and New Testament calls on every man who comes within the reach of a hearing, to cease from all sin, and turn him to all righteousness. In following its example, let us be fearless of all consequences. It may not suit the artificial processes of some of our systems, nor fall in with the order of their well-weighed and carefully arranged articles, to tell at the very outset of these obvious reformations which I am now pressing upon you. But sure I am that an apostle would have felt no difficulty on the subject; nor whatever the visible sin which deformed you, or whatever the visible act of obedience in which you were deficient, would he have been restrained from giving his immediate energy to the work of calling on you to abstain from the one and to do the other.

The disciples of John could not have such a clear view of the ground of acceptance before God, as an enlightened disciple of the apostles. Yet the want of this clear view did not prevent them from being right subjects for John's preparatory instructions. And what were these instructions? Soldiers were called on to give up their violence, and publicans their exactions, and rich men the confinement of their own wealth to their own gratification; and will any man hesitate for a moment to decide, whether those who turned away from the directions of the forerunner, or those who followed them, were in the likeliest state for receiving light and improvement from the subsequent teaching of the Saviour?

But there is one difference between them and us.

The whole of Christ's teaching, as put down in the word of God, is already before us. Now what precise effect should this have upon the nature of an initiatory address to sinners? The right answer to this question will confirm, or it will demolish the whole of our preceding argument. The alone ground of acceptance, is the righteousness of Christ imputed to all who believe. This truth deserves to be taken up, and urged immediately in the hearing of all who are within the reach of the preacher's voice. Till this truth be received, there should be no rest to the sinner, there is no reconciliation with God, nor will he attain that consummation of holiness, without which there can be no meetness for the enjoyment of heaven. But some are readier to receive this truth than others. The reforming publicans and harlots of John were in a state of greater readiness to receive this truth, than either the Pharisees, or those publicans and harlots who, unmindful of John, still persisted in their iniquities. And who will be in greater readiness to receive this truth in the present day? Will it be the obstinate and determinate doers of all that is sinful, and that too in the face of a call, that they should do works meet for repentance? Or will it be those who, under the influence of this call, do what the disciples of John did before them, turn them from the evil of their manifest iniquities, and so give proof of their earnestness in the way of salvation? It is true that, along with such a call, we might now urge a truth which even John could not. But are we to suspend the call of doing works meet for repentance, till this truth be urged and established in the mind of the hearer? Surely if God thought it

ply sinners with a call to turn them from the evil of their ways, *before* he fully revealed to them the evangelical ground of their acceptance, we may count it scriptural and safe to ply them with this call *at the same time*, that we state to them the evangelical ground of their acceptance. It is true, that the statement may not be comprehended all at once. It may be years before it is listened to by the careless, before it is rested in by the desponding, before the comfort of it is at all felt or appropriated by the doubting and melancholy inquirer. Now what I contend for is, that during this interval of time, these people may and ought to be urged with the call of departing from their iniquities. This very call was brought to bear on the disciples of John, before the ground of their acceptance was fully made known to them; and it might be brought to bear on sinners now, even though it should be before the ground of their acceptance be fully understood by them. The effect of this preparatory instruction in these days, was to fit John's disciples for the subsequent revelation of Christ and his apostles. It is true, that we are in possession of that doctrine which they only had the prospect of. But it accords with experience, that this doctrine might be addressed without effect for years to men inquiring after salvation. The doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, might be announced in all its force, and in all its simplicity, to men who hold out against it; and you would surely say of them, that the way of the Lord had not been prepared to their minds, nor his paths made straight. Now we read of such a preparation set a going in behalf of men to whom this

l not yet been revealed. Will this
e altogether ineffectual in behalf of men,
his doctrine is not yet understood? Surely
dent, that in the days of John, men who,
to his call, were struggling with their
were in a likelier way for receiving those larger
truth, which were afterward revealed,
o, in the face of that call, were obsti-
resumptuously retaining them. Suffer
s of the same advantage now.
my brethren, who, in obedience to the calls that
e been sounded in your hearing, are struggling
your sins, are in a likelier way for receiving
larger measures of truth which are now re-
l, than those of you who feel no earnestness,
re making no endeavours upon the subject.
While, therefore, I announce to you, in the most distinct terms, that you will not be saved unless you are found in the righteousness of Christ, this will not restrain me at the very same time from doing what John did. You know how his disciples were prepared for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, who guides unto all truth; and while I do not think that any one point of time is too early for offering Christ to you, in all the benefits of his sacrifice, in all the imputed merits of his perfect righteousness, in all the privileges which he has proclaimed and purchased for believers; all I contend for is, that neither is there any point of time too early for letting you know, that all sin must be abandoned, for calling on you to enter into the work of struggling with all sin immediately, for warning you, that while you persist in these sinful actions which you might give up, and

would give up, were a temporal inducement held out to you, I have no evidence of your receiving benefit from the word of salvation that I am sounding in your ears. There is surely room for telling sinners more than one thing, in the course of the very earliest lesson that is laid before them. It is an exclusive deference to the one point, and the one principle, and the bringing of every thing else into a forced subordination upon it, which has enfeebled many an attempt to turn sinners to Christ from their iniquities. I can surely tell a man, that unless he is walking in a particular line, he will not reach the object he is aiming at; and I can tell him at the same time, that neither will he reach it, unless he have his eyes open, and he look upon the object. On these two unquestionable truths, I bid him both walk and look at the same time, and at the same time he can do both. In the same manner I may tell a man, that unless he give up stealing, he shall not reach heaven; and I may also tell him, that unless he accept, by faith, Christ as his alone Saviour, he shall not reach heaven. On these two truths I found two practical directions; and I must be convinced, that the doing of the one hinders the doing of the other, ere I desist from that which the first teachers of Christianity did before me,—proclaim Christ, and within the compass of the same breathing, call on men to do works meet for repentance.

In the order of time, the practical instructions of John went before the full announcement of the doctrines of salvation. I do not think, however, that this order is authoritative upon us; but far less do I think that our full possession of the doctrine of sal-

vation confers any authority upon us for reversing the historical process of the New Testament. I bring all the truths which the teachers of those days addressed to the sinners among whom they laboured, to bear immediately upon you sinners now. And while I call upon you to turn from the evil of your ways, I also warn you of the danger of putting away from you the offered Saviour, or refusing all your confidence in that name than which there is no other given under heaven whereby men can be saved.

If by faith be meant the embracing of one doctrine, then I can understand how some might be alarmed lest an outset so practical should depose faith from the precedency which belongs to it. But if by faith be meant a reliance on the whole testimony of Scripture, then the precedency of faith is not at all broken in upon. If, on the call of "Flee from the coming wrath," I get you to struggle it with your more palpable iniquities, I see in that very struggle the operation of a faith in the divine testimony about the realities of an invisible world, and I have reason to bless God that he has wrought in you what I am sure nō argument and no vehemence of mine could, without the power of his Spirit, ever have accomplished. Those of you who have thus evinced one exercise of faith, I look upon as more hopeful subjects for another exercise, than those of you who remain trenched in obstinacy and unconcern. And when I tell the former, that nothing will get them acceptance with God, but the mediation of Christ offered to all who come, it will be to them, and not to the latter, that I shall look for an earnest desire after the offered Saviour. When I tell them that they affront God

by not receiving the record which he gives of his Son, it will be to them and not to the others, that I shall look for a submissive and thankful acquiescence in the whole of his salvation; and thus passing with the docility of little children from one lesson of the Bible to another; these are the people who, working because God so bids them, will count that a man is not justified by the works of the law, because God so tells them; these are the people who, not offended by what Christ told them at the outset, that he who cometh unto him must forsake all, will evince their willingness to forsake all, by turning from their iniquities, and coming unto Christ; these are the people who, while they do what they may with their hands, will think that while their heart is not directed to the love of God, they have done nothing; and counting it a faithful saying, that without Christ they can do nothing, they will take to him as their sanctifier as well as their Saviour, and having received him as the Lord their righteousness, will ever repair to him and keep by him as the Lord their strength.

While I urge upon you the doing of every obviously right thing, you will not conceive of me that I want you to rest in this doing. I trust that my introductory paragraphs may convince you how much of this doing may be gone through, and yet the mighty object of the obedience of the willing heart might be unreached and unaccomplished. Not to urge the doing, lest you should rest, would be to deviate from scriptural example. And again, to urge the doing, and leave you to rest, would be also to deviate from scriptural example. John the Bap-

tist urged the doing of many things, and his faithful disciples set themselves to the performance of what he bade them do. They entered immediately on the field of active and diligent service. But did they stop short? No; out of the very preaching of their master did they obtain a caution against resting; and the same submissive deference to his authority, in virtue of which they were set a working, led them also, along with their working at the things which he set them to, to look forward to greater things than these. He told them expressly, that all his preaching was as nothing to the preaching of one who was to come after him. They were diligent with present things, but be assured that they combined with this diligence the attitude of looking forward to greater things. Is this the attitude of men who place their repose and their dependance upon the performances on hand? Was it not the attitude of men walking in the way revealed by a messenger from heaven, to the object which this messenger pointed out to them. I call on you to commence at this moment an immediate struggle with all sin, and an immediate striving after all righteousness; but I would not be completing even the lesson of John, and far less would I be bringing forward the counsel of God as made known to us in his subsequent revelation, were I to say any thing which led you to stop short at those visible reformations, which formed the great burden of John's practical addresses to his countrymen; and therefore along with your doing, and most diligently doing all that is within your reach, I call on you to pray, and most fervently and faithfully to pray for that larger baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which

your hearts may be cleansed from all their corruptions, and you be enabled to render unto God all the purity of a spiritual obedience.

I cannot expatiate within the limits of this short Address on the texts both of the Old and New Testament, which serve to establish, that the right attitude of a returning sinner is what I have sometimes called in your hearing, the compound attitude of service and expectation. But I shall repeat a few of these texts, that they may suggest what you have been in the habit of hearing from me upon this subject. "And Samuel spake to all the house of Israel saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only." "They will not frame their doings to turn unto the Lord, "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment and do justice, for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it, that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil." "Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out into thy house. When thou seest the naked, cover him, and hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward." "He that hath my command-

ments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." "Trust in the Lord and do good."

But danger presses on us in every direction; and in the work of dividing the word of truth, many, and very many, are the obstacles which lie in the way of our doing it rightly. When a Minister gives his strength to one particular lesson, it often carries in it the appearance of his neglecting all the rest, and throwing into the back ground other lessons of equal importance. It might require the ministrations of many years to do away this appearance. Sure I am, that I despair of doing it away within the limits of this short Address to any but yourselves. You know all that I have urged upon the ground of your acceptance with God; upon the freeness of that offer which is by Christ Jesus; upon the honest invitations which every where abound in the Gospel, that all who will may take hold of it; upon the necessity of being found by God not in your own righteousness, but in the righteousness which is of Christ; upon the helplessness of man, and how all the strugglings

of his own unaided strength can never carry him to the length of a spiritual obedience; upon the darkness and enmity of his mind about the things of God, and how this can never be dissolved, till he who by nature stands afar off is brought near by the blood of the atonement, and he receives that repentance and that remission of sins, which Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to dispense to all who believe in him. These are offers and doctrines which might be addressed, and ought to be addressed *immediately* to all. But the call I have been urging upon you through the whole of this pamphlet, of "Cease ye from your manifest transgressions," should be addressed along with them. Now here lies the difficulty with many a sincere lover of the truth as it is in Jesus. He feels a backwardness in urging this call, lest it should somehow or other impair the freeness of the offer, or encroach upon the singleness of that which is stated to be our alone meritorious ground of acceptance before God. In reply to this, let it be well observed, that though the offer be at all times free, it is not at all times listened to; and though the only ground of acceptance be that righteousness of Christ which is unto all them and upon all them that believe, yet some are in likelier circumstances for being brought to this belief than others. There is one class of hearers who are in a greater state of readiness for being impressed by the Gospel than another,—and I fear that all the use has not been made of this principle which Scripture and experience warrant us to do. Every attempt to work man into a readiness for receiving the offer has been discouraged, as if it carried in it a reflection against

the freeness of the offer itself. The obedient disciples of John were more prepared for the doctrines of grace, than the careless hearers of this prophet; but their obedience did not confer any claim of merit upon them, it only made them more disposed to receive the good tidings of that salvation which was altogether of grace. A despiser of ordinances is put into a likelier situation for receiving the free offer of the Gospel, by being prevailed upon to attend a church where this offer is urged upon his acceptance. His attendance does not impair the freeness of the offer. Yet where is the man so warped by a misleading speculation, as to deny that the doing of this previous to his union with Christ, and preparatory to that union, may be the very mean of the free offer being received. Again, it is the lesson both of experience and of the Bible, that the young are likelier subjects for religious instruction than the old. The free offer may and ought to be addressed to both these classes; but generally speaking, it is in point of fact more productive of good when addressed to the first class than the second. And we do not say that youth confers any meritorious title to salvation, nor do we make any reflection on the freeness of the offer, when we urge it upon the young, lest they should get old, and it have less chance of being laid before them with acceptance. We make no reflection upon the offer as to its character of freeness, but we proceed upon the obvious fact, that, free as it is, it is not so readily listened to or laid hold of by the second class of hearers as by the first. And, lastly, when addressing sinners now, all of them might and ought to be plied with the free offer of salvation at the

very outset. But if it be true, that those of them who wilfully persist in those misdoings, which they could give up on the inducement of a temporal reward, will not, in point of fact, be so impressed by the offer, or be so disposed to accept of it, as those who (on the call of—"Flee from the coming wrath;" and on being told, that unless they repent they shall perish; and on being made to know, what our Saviour made inquirers know at the very starting point of their progress as his disciples, that he who followeth after him must forsake all,) have begun to break off their sins, and to put the evil of their doings away from them: then we are not stripping the offer of its attribute of perfect freeness, but we are only doing what God in his wisdom did two thousand years ago; we are, under Him, preparing souls for the reception of this offer, when, along with the business of proposing it, which we cannot do too early, we bring the urgency of an immediate call to bear on the children of iniquity, that they should cease to do evil, and learn to do well.

The publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God before the Pharisees, and yet the latter were free from the outward transgressions of the former. Now, the fear which restrains many from lifting the immediate call of,—"Cease ye from your transgressions," is, lest it should put those who obey the call into the state of Pharisees; and there is a secret, though not avowed, impression in their minds, that it were better for their hearers to remain in the state of publicans and harlots, and in this state to have the offer of Christ and all his benefits set before them. But mark well, that it was not the pub-

licans and harlots who persisted in their iniquities, but they who counted John to be a prophet, and in obedience to his call were putting their iniquities away from them, who had the advantage of the Pharisees. None will surely say, that those of them who continued as they were, were put into a state of preparation for the Saviour by the preaching of John. Some will be afraid to say, that those of them who gave up their iniquities at the bidding of John were put into a state of preparation, lest it should encourage a pharisaical confidence in our own doings. But mark the distinction between these and the Pharisees: The Pharisees might be as free as the reforming publicans and harlots, of those visible transgressions which characterized them; but on this they rested their confidence, and put the offered Saviour away from them. The publicans and harlots, so far from resting their confidence on the degree of reformation which they had accomplished, were prompted to this reformation by the hope of the coming Saviour. They connected with all their doings the expectation of greater things. They waited for the kingdom of God that was at hand; and the preaching of John, under the influence of which they had put away from them many of their misdeeds, could never lead them to stop short at this degree of amendment, when the very same John told them of one who was to come after him, in comparison of whom he and all his sermons were as nothing. The Saviour did come, and he said of those publicans and harlots who believed and repented at the preaching of John, that they entered the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisees. They had not earned that kingdom by their doings,

but they were in a fitter and readier state for receiving the tidings of it. The gospel came to them on the footing of a free and unmerited offer; and on this footing it should be proposed to all. But it is not on this footing that it will be accepted by all. Not by men who, free from many glaring and visible iniquities, rest on the decency of their own character;—not by men who, deformed by these iniquities, still wilfully and obstinately persist in them; but by men who, earnest in their inquiries after salvation, and who, made to know, as they ought to be at the very outset of their inquiries, that it is a salvation from sin as well as from punishment, have given up the practice of their outward iniquities, as the first fruit and evidence of their earnestness.

Let me, therefore, in addition to the lesson I have already urged upon you, warn you against a pharisaical confidence in your own doings. While, on the one hand, I tell you that none are truly seeking who have not begun to do; I, on the other hand, tell you, that none have truly found who have not taken up with Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. Let Jesus Christ, the same to-day, yesterday, and forever, be the end of your conversation. Never take rest till you have found it in him. You never will have a well-grounded comfort in your intercourse with God, till you have learned the way of going to the throne of his grace in fellowship with Christ as your appointed Mediator;—you never will rejoice in hope of the coming glory, till your peace be made with God through Jesus Christ our Lord; you never will be sure of pardon, till you rest in the forgiveness of your sins as coming to you through

the redemption which is in his blood. And what is more, addressing you as people who have received a practical impulse to the obedience of the commandments, never forget, that, while the reformation of your first and earliest stages in the Christian life went no farther than to the amendment of your more obvious and visible deficiencies, this reformation, to be completed, must bring the soul and spirit, as well as the body, under a subserviency to the glory of God; and it never can be completed but by the shedding abroad of that Spirit which is daily poured on the daily prayers of believers: and I call upon you always to look up to God through the channel of Christ's appointed mediatorship, that you may receive through this same channel a constant and ever increasing supply of the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

I call upon you to be up and doing; but I call upon you with the very same breath, not to rest satisfied with any dark, or doubtful, or confused notions about your way of acceptance with God; and let it be your earnest and never-ceasing object to be found in that way. While you have the commandments and keep them, look at the same time for the promised manifestations. To be indifferent whether you have a clear understanding of the righteousness of Christ, is the same as thinking it not worth your while to inquire into that which God thought it worth his while to give up his Son unto the death that he might accomplish. It is to affront God, by letting him speak while you refuse to listen or attend to him. Have a care, lest it be an insulting sentiment on your part, as to the worth of your polluted ser-

vious; and that, sinful as they are, and defective as they are, they are good enough for God. Lean not on such a bruised reed; but let Christ, in all the perfection of that righteousness, which is unto all them and upon all them that believe, be the alone rock of your confidence. Your feet will never get on a sure place till they be established on that foundation than which there is no other; and to delay a single moment in your attempts to reach it, and to find rest upon it, after it is so broadly announced to you, is to incur the aggravated guilt of those who neglect the great salvation, and who make God a liar, by suspending their belief of that record which he hath given of his Son,—"And this is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Again I call upon you to be up and doing; and I call upon you to accept of Christ as your alone Saviour: but I call upon you, at the same time, to look to the whole extent of his salvation. "You hath he quickened, having forgiven you all trespasses." There is the forgiveness of all that has been dead, and sinful, and alienated within you; but there is also a quickening, and a reforming, and a putting within you a near and a lively sense of God, so as that you may henceforth serve him with newness of heart, and walk before him in all newness of life and of conversation. Your hearts will be enlarged, so as that you may run the way of all the commandments. O how it puts to flight all pharisaical confidence in the present exercises of obedience, when one casts an enlightened eye over the whole extent of the Christan race, and thinks of the mighty extent of

those attainments which were exemplified by the disciples of the New Testament! The service which I now yield, and is perhaps offered up in the spirit of bondage, must be offered up in the spirit of adoption. It must be the obedience of a child, who yields the willing homage of his affections to his reconciled father. It must be the obedience of the heart; and O how far is a slavish performance of the bidden task, from the consent of the inner man to the law of that God whom he delights to honour! This love to him, and delight in him, occupy the foremost place in the list of the bidden requirements. If I love the creature more than the Creator, I trample on the authority of the first and greatest of the commandments; and what an imposing exhibition of sobriety, and justice, and almsgiving, and religious decency, may be presented in the character and doings of him whose conversation is not in heaven, who minds earthly things, who loves his wealth more than God, who likes his ease and comfort on this side of time more than all his prospects on the other side of it, and who, therefore, though he may never have looked upon himself to be any thing else than a fair Christian, is looked upon by every spiritual being as a rebel to his God, with the principle of rebellion firmly seated in his most vital part, even in his heart turned in coldness and alienation away from him.

But if God be looked upon by you as a Father with whom you are reconciled through the blood of sprinkling, it will not be so with you. Now, this is what he calls you to do. He gives you a warrant to choose him as your God. He offers himself to your acceptance, and beseeches all to whom the word of

salvation is sent, to be reconciled to Him. It is indeed a wonderful change in the state of a heart, when, giving up its coldness and indifference to God, (and I call upon every careless and unawakened man to tell me, upon his honesty, whether this be not the actual state of his heart,) it surrenders itself to him with the warm and the willing tribute of all its affections. Now, there is not one power, within the compass of nature, that can bring about this change. It does not lie with man to give up the radical iniquity of an alienated heart; the Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, and the Leopard his spots. But what cannot be done by him is done to him, when he accepts of the Gospel. The promises of Christ are abundantly performed upon all who trust in him. Through him is the dispensation of forgiveness, and with him is the dispensation of the all-powerful and all-subduing Spirit. While, then, with the very first mention of his name, I call on you to cease your hand from doing evil, surely there is nothing in the call that can lead you to stop at any one point of obedience, when I, at the same time, tell you of the mighty change that must be accomplished, ere you are meet for the inheritance of the saints. You must be made the workmanship of God; you must be born again; you must be made to feel your dependance on the power of the renewing Spirit; and that power must come down upon you, and keep by you, and by his ever-needed supplies must form the habitual answer to your habitual and believing prayers.

I have now got upon ground on which many will refuse to go along with me. I can get their testimony to the spectacle of a reforming people, putting the

visible iniquities of stealing, and lying, and evil speaking, and drunkenness, away from them; but from the moment we come to the only principle which confers any value on these visible expressions, even the willing homage of the heart to God, and to his law in all its spirituality and extent; and from the moment that we come to the only expedient by which such a principle can ever obtain an establishment within us, (and we challenge them to attempt the establishment of this principle in any other way,) even the operation of that spirit which is given to those who accept of Christ as he is laid before us in the Gospel; then, and at that moment, are we looked upon as having entered within the borders of fanaticism; and, while they lavish their superficial admiration on the flowers of virtue, do they refuse the patience of their attention to the root from which they spring, or to the nourishment which maintains them.

And here I cannot but record the effect of an actual though undesigned experiment, which I prosecuted for upwards of twelve years among you. For the greater part of that time, I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny,—in a word, upon all those deformities of character, which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and the disturbers of human society. Now could I, upon the strength of these warm expostulations, have got the thief to give up his stealing, and the evil speaker his censoriousness, and the liar his deviations from truth, I should have felt all the repose of one who had gotten his ultimate object. It

never occurred to me that all this might have been done, and yet every soul of every hearer have remained in full alienation from God; and that even could I have established in the bosom of one who stole, such a principle of abhorrence at the meanness of dishonesty, that he was prevailed upon to steal no more, he might still have retained a heart as completely unturned to God, and as totally unpossessed by a principle of love to Him, as before. In a word, though I might have made him a more upright and honourable man, I might have left him as destitute of the essence of religious principle as ever. But the interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the mind to God, while I was inattentive to the way in which this enmity is dissolved, even by the free offer on the one hand, and the believing acceptance on the other, of the gospel salvation; while Christ, through whose blood the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, is brought near to the heavenly Lawgiver whom he has offended, was scarcely ever spoken of, or spoken of in such a way, as stripped him of all the importance of his character and his offices, even at this time I certainly did press the reformations of honour, and truth, and integrity among my people; but I never once heard of any such reformations having been effected among them. If there was any thing at all brought about in this way, it was more than ever I got any account of. I am not sensible, that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners. And it was not till I got

impressed by the utter alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God; it was not till reconciliation to Him became the distinct and the prominent object of my ministerial exertions; it was not till I took the scriptural way of laying the method of reconciliation before them; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ was urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit given through the channel of Christ's mediatorship to all who ask him was set before them as the unceasing object of their dependance and their prayers; it was not, in one word, till the contemplations of my people were turned to these great and essential elements in the business of a soul providing for its interest with God and the concerns of its eternity, that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but I am afraid at the same time, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations. Ye servants, whose scrupulous fidelity has now attracted the notice, and drawn forth in my hearing a delightful testimony from your masters, what mischief you would have done, had your zeal for doctrines and sacraments been accompanied by the sloth and the remissness, and what, in the prevailing tone of moral relaxation, is counted the allowable purloining of your earlier days! But a sense of your heavenly Master's eye has brought another influence to bear upon you; and while you are thus striving to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things, you may, poor as you are, reclaim the great ones of the land to the acknowledgment of the faith. You have at least taught me, that to preach Christ is the

only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches; and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson, which I pray God I may be enabled to carry with all its simplicity into a wider theatre, and to bring with all the power of its subduing efficacy upon the vices of a more crowded population.

And here it gives me pleasure to observe, that, earnest as I have been for a plain and practical outset, the very first obedience of John's disciples was connected with a belief in the announcement of a common Saviour. This principle was present with them, and had its influence on the earliest movements of their repentance. Faith in Christ had at that time but an obscure dawning in their minds; but they did not wait for its full and its finished splendour, till they should begin the work of keeping the commandments. To this infant faith there corresponded a certain degree of obedience, and this obedience grew more enlightened, more spiritual, more allied with the purity of the heart, and the movements of the inner man, just as faith obtained its brighter and larger accessions in the course of the subsequent revelations. The disciple of John keeping himself free from extortion and adultery, was a very different man from the Pharisee, who was neither an extortioner nor an adulterer. The mind of the Pharisee rested on his present performances; the mind of the disciple was filled with the expectation of a higher Teacher, and he looked forward to him, and was in the attitude of readiness to listen, and believe, and obey. Many of them were transferred from the forerunner to the Saviour, and they

companied with him during his abode in the world, and were found with one accord in one place on the day of Pentecost, and shared in the influences of that Comforter, whom Christ promised to send down upon his disciples on earth, from the place to which he had ascended in heaven; and thus it is that the same men who started with the preaching of John at the work of putting their obvious and palpable transgressions away from them, were met afterwards at the distance of years living the life of faith in Christ, and growing in meetness for a spiritual inheritance, by growing in all the graces and accomplishments of a spiritual obedience. There was a faith in Christ, which presided over the very first steps of their practical career; but it is worthy of being remarked, that they did not wait in indolence till this faith should receive its further augmentations. Upon this faith, humble as it was at its commencement, their Teacher exacted a corresponding obedience, and this obedience, so far from being suspended till what was lacking in their faith should be perfected, was the very path which conducted them to larger manifestations. Now is not faith a growing principle at this hour? Is not the faith of an incipient Christian different in its strength, and in the largeness of its contemplations, from the faith of him who, by reason of use, has had his senses well exercised to discern both the good and the evil? I am willing to concede it, for it accords with all my experience on the subject, that some anticipation, however faint, of the benefit to be derived from an offered Saviour; some apprehension, however indistinct, of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; some

hope, inspired by the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and which nothing but the preaching of that Gospel in all its peculiarity will ever awaken in the mind,—that these are the principles which preside over the very first movements of a sinner, casting away from him his transgressions, and returning unto God. But let us not throw any impediment in the way of these first movements. Let us have a practical outset. Let us not be afraid of giving an immediate character of exertion to the very infancy of a Christian's career. To wait in slavish adherence to system, till the principle of faith be deposited with all the tenacity of a settled assurance in the mind, or the brilliancy of a finished light be thrown around it, would be to act in the face of scriptural example. Let the gospel be preached in all its freeness at the very outset; but let us never forget, that to every varying degree of faith in the mind of the hearer there goes an obedience along with it; that to forsake the evil of his ways can never be pressed too early upon his observance; that this, and every subsequent degree of obedience, is the prescribed path to clearer manifestations;* and that, to attempt the establishment of a perfect faith by the single work of expounding the truth, is to strike out a spark of our own kindling—it is to do the thing in our own way—it is to throw aside the use of scriptural expedients, and to substitute the mere possession of a dogma, for that principle which, growing progressively within us, animates and sustains the whole course of a humble, and diligent, and assiduous, and pains-taking Christian.

* John, xiv. 21.; Acts, v. 32.

Whence the fact, that the deriders and the enemies of evangelical truth set themselves forward as the exclusive advocates of morality? It is because many of its friends have not ventured to show so bold and so immediate a front on this subject as they ought to have done. They are positively afraid of placing morality on the fore-ground of their speculations. They do not like it to be so prominently brought forward at the commencement of their instructions. They have it, ay, and in a purer and holier form than its more ostentatious advocates; but they have thrown a doctrinal barrier around it, which hides it from the general observation. Would it not be better to drag it from this concealment—to bring it out to more immediate view—to place it in large and visible characters on the very threshold of our subject; and if our Saviour told his countrymen, at the very outset of their discipleship, that they who follow after him must forsake all, is there any thing to prevent us from battling it at the very outset of our ministrations, with all that is glaringly and obviously wrong? Much should be done to chase away the very general delusion which exists among the people of this country, that the preachers of faith are not the preachers of morality. If there be any thing in the arrangements of a favorite system which are at all calculated to foster this delusion, these arrangements should just be broke in upon. Obedience should be written upon every signal; and departure from all iniquity, should be made to float, in a bright and legible inscription, upon all our standards.

I call on you, my brethren, to abound in those good deeds, by which, if done in the body, Christ will be

magnified in your bodies. I call on you for a prompt vindication of the truth as it is in Jesus, by your example and your lives. Let me hear of your being the most equitable masters, and the most faithful servants, and the most upright members of society, and the most watchful parents, and the most dutiful children. Never forget, that the object of the Saviour is to redeem you from all iniquity, and that every act of wilful indulgence, in any one species of iniquity, is a refusal to go along with him. Do maintain to the eye of by-standers the conspicuous front of a reforming, and conscientious, and ever-doing people. Meet the charge of those who are strangers to the power of the truth, by the noblest of all refutations—by the graces and accomplishments of a life given in faithful and entire dedication to the will of the Saviour. Let the remembrance of what he gave for you, ever stir you up to the sense of what you should give him back again; and while others talk of good works, in such a way as to depose Christ from his pre-eminence, do you perform these good works through Christ, by the power of his grace working in you mightily.

And think not that you have attained, or are already perfect. Have your eye ever directed to the perfect righteousness of Christ, as the only ground of your acceptance with God, and as the only example you should never cease to aspire after. Rest not in any one measure of attainment. Think not that you should stop short till you are righteous, even as he is glorious. Take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be fitted for the contest, and prove that you are indeed born again by the anointing

which you have received, being an anointing which remaineth. May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly. May he shed abroad his love in your hearts. And may the Spirit which I call on you to pray for, in the faith of Him who is entrusted with the dispensation of it, impel you to all diligence, that you may be found of Him, at his coming, without spot, and blameless.

I shall conclude this very hurried and imperfect Address, with the last words of my last sermon to you.

"It is not enough that you receive Christ for the single object of forgiveness, or as a Priest who has wrought out an atonement for you; for Christ offers himself in more capacities than this one, and you do not receive him truly, unless you receive him just as he offers himself. Again, it is not enough that you receive Christ only as a Priest and a Prophet; for all that he teaches will be to you a dead letter, unless you are qualified to understand and to obey it; and if you think that you are qualified by nature, you, in fact, refuse his teaching, at the very time that you profess him to be your teacher, for he says, 'without me ye can do nothing.' You must receive him for strength, as well as for forgiveness and direction, or, in other words, you must submit to him as your King, not merely to rule over you by his law, but to rule in you by his Spirit. You must live in constant dependance on the influences of his grace, and if you do so, you never will stop short at any one point of obedience; but, knowing that the grace of God is all-powerful, you will suffer no difficulties to stop your progress; you will suffer no paltry limit of what unaided human nature can do, to bound your ambi-

tion after the glories of a purer and a better character than any earthly principle can accomplish; you will enter a career, of which you at this moment see not the end; you will try an ascent, of which the lofty eminence is hid in the darkness of futurity; the chilling sentiment, that no higher obedience is expected of me than what I can yield, will have no influence upon you, for the mighty stretch of attainment that you look forward to, is not what I can do, but what Christ can do in me; and, with the all-subduing instrument of his grace to help you through every difficulty, and to carry you in triumph over every opposition, you will press forward conquering and to conquer; and, while the world knoweth not the power of those great and animating hopes which sustain you, you will be making daily progress in a field of discipline and acquirement which they have never entered; and in patience and forgiveness, and gentleness and charity, and the love of God and the love of your neighbour, which is like unto the love of God, you will prove that a work of grace is going on in your hearts, even that work by which the image you lost at the fall is repaired and brought back again, the empire of sin within you is overthrown, the subjection of your hearts to what is visible and earthly is exchanged for the power of the unseen world over its every affection, and you be filled with such a faith, and such a love, and such a superiority to perishable things, as will shed a glory over the whole of your daily walk, and give to every one of your doings the high character of a candidate for eternity.

"Christ is offered to all of you for forgiveness. The man who takes him for this single object must

be looking at him with an eye half shut upon the revelation he makes of himself. Look at him with an open and a steadfast eye, and then I will call you a true believer; and sure I am, that if you do so, you cannot avoid seeing him in the earnestness of his desire that you should give up all sin, and enter from this moment into all obedience. True, and most true, my brethren, that faith will save you; but it must be a whole faith in a whole Bible. True, and most true, that they who keep the commandments of Jesus shall enter into life; but you are not to shrink from any one of these commandments, or to say because they are so much above the power of humanity, that you must give up the task of attempting them. True, and most true, that he who trusteth to his obedience as a saviour, is shifting his confidence from the alone foundation it can rest upon. Christ is your Saviour; and when I call upon you to rejoice in that reconciliation which is through him, I call upon you not to leave him for a single moment, when you engage in the work of doing those things which if left undone, will exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. Take him along with you into all your services. Let the sentiment ever be upon you, that what I am now doing I may do in my own strength to the satisfaction of man, but I must have the power of Christ resting upon the performance, if I wish to do it in the way that is acceptable to God. Let this be your habitual sentiment, and then the supposed opposition between faith and works vanishes into nothing. The life of a believer is made up of good works; and faith is the animating and the power-working principle of every one of them. The spirit

of Christ actuates and sustains the whole course of your obedience. You walk not away from him, but in the language of the text, you 'walk in him,' (Col. ii. 6.) and as there is not one of your doings in which he does not feel a concern, and prescribe a duty for you, so there is not one of them in which his grace is not in readiness to put the right principle into your heart, and to bring it out into your conduct, and to make your walk accord with your profession, so as to let the world see upon you without, the power and the efficacy of the sentiment within; and thus, while Christ has the whole merit of your forgiveness, he has the whole merit of your sanctification also, and the humble and deeply-felt consciousness of 'nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me,' restores to Jesus Christ all the credit and all the glory which belong to him, by making him your only, and your perfect, and your entire, and your altogether Saviour.

"Choose him, then, my brethren, choose him as the Captain of your salvation. Let him enter into your hearts by faith, and let him dwell continually there. Cultivate a daily intercourse and a growing acquaintance with him. O, you are in safe company, indeed, when your fellowship is with him! The shield of his protecting mediatorship is ever between you and the justice of God; and out of his fulness there goeth a constant stream, to nourish, and to animate, and to strengthen every believer. Why should the shifting of human instruments so oppress and so discourage you, when he is your willing friend; when he is ever present, and is at all times in readiness; when he, the same to-day, yesterday, and forever, is to be met with in every place; and while

his disciples here, giving way to the power of sight, are sorrowful, and in great heaviness, because they are to move at a distance from one another, he, my brethren, he has his eye upon all neighborhoods and all countries, and will at length gather his disciples into one eternal family? With such a Master, let us quit ourselves like men. With the magnificence of eternity before us, let time, with all its fluctuations, dwindle into its own littleness. If God is pleased to spare me, I trust I shall often meet with you in person, even on this side of the grave; but if not, let us often meet in prayer at the mercy-seat of God. While we occupy different places on earth, let our mutual intercessions for each other go to one place in heaven. Let the Saviour put our supplications into one censer; and be assured, my brethren, that after the dear and the much-loved scenery of this peaceful vale has disappeared from my eye, the people who live in it shall retain a warm and an ever-during place in my memory;—and this mortal body must be stretched on the bed of death, ere the heart which now animates it can resign its exercise of longing after you, and praying for you, that you may so receive Christ Jesus, and so walk in him, and so hold fast the things you have gotten, and so prove that the labour I have had among you has not been in vain; that when the sound of the last trumpet awakens us, these eyes, which are now bathed in tears, may open upon a scene of eternal blessedness, and we, my brethren, whom the providence of God has withdrawn for a little while from one another, may on that day be found side by side at the right hand of the everlasting throne."

APPENDIX.

Since the present edition of this work was putting to press, I have seen a review of it by the *Christian Instructor*, and the following are the immediate observations which the perusal of this review has suggested.

I meant no attack on any body of clergy, and I have made no attack upon them. The people whom I addressed were the main object on which my attention rested; and any thing I have said in the style of animadversion, was chiefly, if not exclusively, with a reference to that perverseness which I think I have witnessed in the conceptions and habits of private Christians.

I have alluded, no doubt, to a method of treatment on the part of some of the teachers of Christianity, and which I believe to be both inefficient and unscriptural. But have I at all asserted the extent to which this method prevails? Have I ventured to fasten an imputation upon any marked or general body of Christian ministers? It was no object of mine to set forth or to signalize my own peculiarity in this matter; and if I rightly understand who the men are whom the reviewer has in his eye when he speaks of the evangelical clergy, then does he represent me as dealing out my censures against those whom I honestly believe to be the instrumental cause of nearly all the vital and substantial Christianity in the land.

Again, is it not possible for a man to have an awakened and tender sense of the sinfulness of one sin, and to have a very slender and inadequate sense of the sinfulness of another? Might not the first circumstance beget in his mind an honest and a general desire to be delivered from sin; and might not the second circumstance account for the fact, that with this mourning for sin in the gross, he should put forth his hand without scruple to the commission of what is actually sinful? I do not know a more familiar exhibition of this, than that of a man who would be

visited with remorse were he to walk in the fields on a Sabbath day at the time of divine service, and the very same man indulging without remorse his propensity to throw ridicule or discredit on an absent character. His actual remorse on the commission of all that he feels to be sinful, might lead a man to mourn over sin in the general; but surely this general direction of his can have no such necessary influence, as the reviewer contends for, in the way of leading him to renounce what he does not feel to be sinful. But this is what he should be made to feel; and it may be done in two ways,—either in the didactic way, by a formal announcement that the deed in question is contrary to the law of God; or in the imperative way, by bidding him cease from the doing of it,—a way no less effective and scriptural than the former, and brought to bear in the New Testament upon men at the earliest conceivable stage of their progress from sin unto righteousness.

I share most cordially in opinion with the reviewer, that he might extend his observations greatly beyond the length of the original pamphlet, were he to say all that might be said on the topics brought forward in it. I believe that it would require the compass of an extended volume to meet every objection, and to turn the argument in every possible way. I did not anticipate all the notice that has been taken of this performance, and am fearful lest it should defeat the intended effect on the hearts of a plain people. With this feeling I close the discussion for the present; and my desire is, that in all I may afterwards say upon this subject, I may be preserved from that tone of controversy, which I feel to be hurtful to the practical influence of every truth it accompanies; and which, I fear, may have in so far infected my former communications, as to make it more fitted to arouse the speculative tendencies of the mind, and provoke to an intellectual warfare, than to tell on the conscience and on the doings of an earnest inquirer.

Glasgow, December, 1815. T. C.

THE

INFLUENCE

OF

BIBLE SOCIETIES,

ON THE

TEMPORAL NECESSITIES OF THE POOR.

BY

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS,
Minister of the Tron Church,
GLASGOW.

BIBLE SOCIETIES.

ARGUMENT.

1. The Objection stated.—2. The Radical Answer to it.—3. But the Objection is not true in point of fact.—4. A former act of charity does not exempt from the obligation of a new act, if it can be afforded.—5. Estimate of the encroachment made by the Bible Society upon the funds of the country.—6. A Subscriber to the Bible Society does not give less to the Poor on that account.—7. Evidence for the truth of this assertion.—8. And explanation of its principle. (1.) The ability for other acts of charity nearly as entire as before.—9. (2) And the disposition greater.—10. Poverty is better kept under by a preventive, than by a positive treatment. —11. Exemplified in Scotland.—12. The Bible Society has a strong preventive operation.—13. And therefore promotes the secular interests of the Poor.—14. The argument carried down to the case of Penny Societies. —15. Difficulty in the exposition of the argument.—16. The effects of a charitable endowment in a parish pernicious to the Poor.—17. By inducing a dependance upon it.—18. And stripping them of their industrious habits.—19. The effects of a Bible Association are in an opposi tedirection to those of a charitable endowment.—20. And it stands completely free of all the objections to which a tax is liable.—21. A Bible Association gives dignity to the Poor.—22. And a delicate reluctance to pauperism.— 23. The shame of pauperism is the best defence against it.—24. How a Bible Association augments this feeling.—25. By dignifying the Poor.— 26. And adding to the influence of Bible Principles.—27. Exemplified in the humblest situation.—28. The progress of these Associations in the country.—29. Compared with other Associations for the relief of temporal necessities.—30. The more salutary influence of Bible Associations.—31. And how they counteract the pernicious influence of other charities.—32. It is best to confide the secular relief of the Poor to individual benevolence. —33. And a Bible Association both augments and enlightens this principle.

1. WITHOUT entering into the positive claims of the Bible Society upon the generosity of the public,

I shall endeavour to do away an objection which meets us at the very outset of every attempt to raise a subscription, or to found an institution in its favour. The secular necessities of the poor are brought into competition with it, and every shilling given to the Bible Society is represented as an encroachment upon that fund which was before allocated to the relief of poverty.

2. Admitting the fact stated in the objection to be true, we have an answer in readiness for it. If the Bible Society accomplish its professed object, which is, to make those who were before ignorant of the Bible better acquainted with it, then the advantage given more than atones for the loss sustained. We stand upon the high ground, that eternity is longer than time, and the unfading enjoyments of the one a boon more valuable than the perishable enjoyments of the other. Money is sometimes expended for the idle purpose of amusing the poor by the gratuitous exhibition of a spectacle or show. It is a far wiser distribution of the money when it is transferred from this object to the higher and more useful objects of feeding those among them who are hungry, clothing those among them who are naked, and paying for medicine or attendance to those among them who are sick. We make bold to say, that if money for the purpose could be got from no other quarter, it would be a wiser distribution still to withdraw it from the objects last mentioned to the supreme object of paying for the knowledge of religion to those among them who are ignorant; and, at the hazard of being execrated by many, we do not hesitate to affirm, that it is better for the poor to be worse fed and worse

clothed, than that they should be left ignorant of those Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

3. But the statement contained in the objection is not true. It seems to go upon the supposition, that the fund for relieving the temporal wants of the poor is the only fund which exists in the country; and that when any new object of benevolence is started, there is no other fund to which we can repair for the requisite expenses. But there are other funds in the country. There is a prodigious fund for the maintenance of Government, nor do we wish that fund to be encroached upon by a single farthing. There is a fund out of which the people of the land are provided in the necessaries of life: and before we incur the odium of trenching upon necessaries, let us first inquire, if there be no other fund in existence. Go then to all who are elevated above the class of mere labourers, and you will find in their possession a fund, out of which they are provided with what are commonly called the superfluities of life. We do not dispute their right to these superfluities, nor do we deny the quantity of pleasure which lies in the enjoyment of them. We only state the existence of such a fund, and that by a trifling act of self-denial on the part of those who possess it, we could obtain all that we are pleading for. It is a little hard, that the competition should be struck between the fund of the Bible Society and the fund for relieving the temporal wants of the poor, while the far larger and more transferable fund for superfluities is left out of consideration entirely, and suffered

to remain an untouched and unimpaired quantity. In this way, the odium of hostility to the poor is fastened upon those who are labouring for their most substantial interests, while a set of men who neglect the immortality of the poor, and would leave their souls to perish, are suffered to sheer off with the credit of all the finer sympathies of our nature.

4. To whom much is given, of them much will be required. Whatever be your former liberalities in another direction, when a new and a likely direction of benevolence is pointed out, the question still comes back upon you, What have you to spare? If there be a remainder left, it is by the extent of this remainder that you will be judged; and it is not right to set the claims of the Bible Society against the secular necessities of the poor, while means so ample are left, that the true way of instituting the competition is to set these claims against some personal gratification which it is in your power to abandon. Have a care, lest with the language of philanthropy in your mouth, you shall be found guilty of the cruellest indifference to the true welfare of the species, and lest the Discerner of your heart shall perceive how it prefers some sordid indulgence of its own to the dearest interests of those around you.

5. But let me not put to hazard the prosperity of our cause, by resting it on a standard of charity far too elevated for the general practice of the times. Let us now drop our abstract reasoning upon the respective funds, and come to an actual specification of their quantities. The truth is, that the fund for the Bible Society is so very small, that it is not entitled to make its appearance in any abstract argu-

ment whatever, and were it not to do away even the shadow of an objection, we would have been asham-ed to have thrown the argument into the language of general discussion. What shall we think of the objection when told, that the whole yearly revenue of the Bible Society, as derived from the contributions of those who support it, does not amount to a half-penny per month from each householder in Britain and Ireland? Can this be considered as a serious invasion upon any one fund allotted to other destinations, and shall the most splendid and promising enterprise that ever benevolence was engaged in be arrested upon an objection so fanciful? We do not want to oppress any individual by the extravagance of our demands. It is not in great sums, but in the combination of littles, that our strength lies. It is the power of combination which resolves the mystery. Great has been the progress and activity of the Bible Society since its first institution. All we want is, that this rate of activity be kept up and extended. The above statement will convince the reader, that there is ample room for the extension. The whole fund for the secular wants of the poor may be left untouched, and as to the fund for luxuries, the revenue of the Bible Society may be augmented a hundred-fold before this fund is sensibly encroached upon. The veriest crumbs and sweepings of extravagance would suffice us; and it will be long, and very long, before any invasion of ours upon this fund shall give rise to any perceivable abridgment of luxury, or have the weight of a straw upon the general style and establishment of families.

6. But there is still another way of meeting the

objection. Let us come immediately to a question upon the point of fact. Does a man, on becoming a subscriber to the Bible Society, give less to the secular wants of the poor than he did formerly? It is true, there is a difficulty in the way of obtaining an answer to this question. He who knows best what answer to give will be the last to proclaim it. In as far as the subscribers themselves are concerned, we must leave the answer to their own experience, and sure we are that that experience will not be against us. But it is not from this quarter that we can expect to obtain the wished for information. The benevolence of an individual does not stand out to the eye of the public. The knowledge of its operations is confined to the little neighbourhood within which it expatiates. It is often kept from the poor themselves, and then the information we are in quest of is shut up with the giver in the silent consciousness of his own bosom, and with God in the book of his remembrance.

7. But much good has been done of late years by the combined exertions of individuals; and benevolence, when operating in this way, is necessarily exposed to public observation. Subscriptions have been started for almost every one object which benevolence can devise, and the published lists may furnish us with data for a partial solution of the proposed question. In point of fact then, those who subscribe for a religious object, subscribe with the greatest readiness and liberality for the relief of human affliction, under all the various forms in which it pleads for sympathy. This is quite notorious. The human mind, by singling out the eternity of others as the main object of its benevolence, does not withdraw

itself from the care of sustaining them on the way which leads to eternity. It exerts an act of preference, but not an act of exclusion. A friend of mine has been indebted to an active and beneficent patron, for a lucrative situation in a distant country, but he wants money to pay his travelling expenses. I commit every reader to his own experience of human nature, when I rest with him the assertion, that if real kindness lay at the bottom of this act of patronage, the patron himself is the likeliest quarter from which the assistance will come. The man who signalizes himself by his religious charities, is not the last but the first man to whom I would apply in behalf of the sick and the destitute. The two principles are not inconsistent. They give support and nourishment to each other, or rather they are exertions of the same principle. This will appear in full display on the day of judgment; and even in this dark and undiscerning world, enough of evidence is before us upon which the benevolence of the Christian stands nobly vindicated, and from which it may be shown, that, while its chief care is for the immortality of others, it casts a wide and a wakeful eye over all the necessities and sufferings of the species.

8. Nor have we far to look for the explanation. The two elements which combine to form an act of charity, are the ability and the disposition, and the question simply resolves itself into this, "In how far these elements will survive a donation to the Bible Society, so as to leave the other charities unimpaired by it?" It is certainly conceivable, that an individual may give every spare farthing of his income to this institution. In this case, there is a

total extinction of the first element. But in point of fact, this is never done, or done so rarely as not to be admitted into any general argument. With by far the greater number of subscribers, the ability is not sensibly encroached upon. There is no visible retrenchment in the superfluities of life. A very slight and partial change in the direction of that fund which is familiarly known by the name of *pocket-money* can, generally speaking, provide for the whole amount of the donation in question. There are a thousand floating and incidental expenses, which can be given up without almost the feeling of a sacrifice, and the diversion of a few of them to the charity we are pleading for, leaves the ability of the giver to all sense as entire as before.

9. But the second element is subject to other laws, and the formal calculations of arithmetic do not apply to it. The disposition is not like the ability, a given quantity which suffers an abstraction by every new exercise. The effect of a donation upon the purse of the giver, is not the same with the moral influence of that donation upon his heart. Yet the two are assimilated by our antagonists, and the pedantry of computation carries them to results which are in the face of all experience. It is not so easy to awaken the benevolent principle out of its sleep, as, when once awakened in behalf of one object, to excite and to interest it in behalf of another. When the bar of selfishness is broken down, and the flood-gates of the heart are once opened, the stream of beneficence can be turned into a thousand directions. It is true, that there can be no beneficence without wealth, as there can be no stream without water. It is conceiv-

able, that the opening of the flood-gates may give rise to no flow, as the opening of a poor man's heart to the distresses of those around him may give rise to no act of almsgiving. But we have already proved the abundance of wealth. [Sec. 8.] It is the selfishness of the inaccessible heart which forms the mighty barrier, and if this could be done away, a thousand fertilizing streams would issue from it. Now, this is what the Bible Society, in many instances, has accomplished. It has unlocked the avenue to many a heart, which was before inaccessible. It has come upon them with all the energy of a popular and prevailing impulse. It has created in them a new taste and a new principle. It has opened the fountain, and we are sure that, in every district of the land where a Bible Association exists, the general principle of benevolence is more active and more expanding than ever.

10. And after all, what is the best method of providing for the secular necessities of the poor? Is it by labouring to meet the necessity after it has occurred, or by labouring to establish a principle and a habit which would go far to prevent its existence? If you wish to get rid of a noxious stream, you may first try to intercept it by throwing across a barrier; but in this way, you only spread the pestilential water over a greater extent of ground, and when the bason is filled, a stream as copious as before is formed out of its overflow. The most effectual method, were it possible to carry it into accomplishment, would be, to dry up the source. The parallel in a great measure holds. If you wish to extinguish poverty, combat with it in its first elements. If you confine your

beneficence to the relief of actual poverty, you do nothing. Dry up, if possible, the spring of poverty, for every attempt to intercept the running stream has totally failed. The education and the religious principle of Scotland have not annihilated pauperism, but they have restrained it to a degree that is almost incredible to our neighbours of the South. They keep down the mischief in its principle. They impart a sobriety and a right sentiment of independence to the character of our peasantry. They operate as a check upon profligacy and idleness. The maintenance of parish schools is a burden upon the landed property of Scotland, but it is a cheap defence against the poor-rates, a burden far heavier, and which is aggravating perpetually. The writer of this paper knows of a parish in Fife, the average maintenance of whose poor is defrayed by twenty-four pounds sterling a year, and of a parish, of the same population, in Somersetshire, where the annual assessments come to thirteen hundred pounds sterling. The preventive regimen of the one country does more than the positive applications of the other. In England, they have suffered poverty to rise to all the virulence of a formed and obstinate disease. But they may as well think of arresting the destructive progress of a torrent by throwing across an embankment, as think that the mere positive administration of relief, will put a stop to the accumulating mischiefs of poverty.

11. The exemption of Scotland from the miseries of pauperism is due to the education which their people receive at schools, and to the Bible which their scholarship gives them access to. The man who subscribes to the divine authority of this simple

saying, "If any would not work neither should he eat," possesses, in the good treasure of his own heart, a far more effectual security against the hardships of indigence, than the man who is trained, by the legal provisions of his country, to sit in slothful dependence upon the liberalities of those around him. It is easy to be eloquent in the praise of those liberalities, but the truth is, that they may be carried to the mischievous extent of forming a depraved and beggarly population. The hungry expectations of the poor will ever keep pace with the assessments of the wealthy, and their eye will be averted from the exertion of their own industry, as the only right source of comfort and independence. It is quite in vain to think, that positive relief will ever do away the wretchedness of poverty. Carry the relief beyond a certain limit, and you foster the diseased principle which gives birth to poverty. On this subject, the people of England feel themselves to be in a state of almost inextricable helplessness, and they are not without their fears of some mighty convulsion, which must come upon them with all the energy of a tempest, before this devouring mischief can be swept away from the face of their community.

12. If any thing can avert this calamity from England, it will be the education of their peasantry, and this is a cause to which the Bible Society is contributing its full share of influence. A zeal for the circulation of the Bible, is inseparable from a zeal for extending among the people the capacity of reading it; and it is not to be conceived, that the very same individual can be eager for the introduction of this volume into our cottages, and sit inactive under

reflection, that it is still a sealed book to th ands of the occupiers. Accordingly we hat the two concerns are keeping pace with one er. he Bible Society does not overstep the city of its assigned object: But the members at Society receive an impulse from the cause, h c es them to promote the education of the by their individual exertions, or by rt to the Soc'ety for Schools. The ve in concert. Each contributes an ial element in the business of enlightening the . The one furnishes the book of knowledge, e other furnishes the key to it. This division ployment, as in every other instance, facilitates ders it more effective. But it does ame individual from giving his co to both; and sure I am, that the man whose feelings have been already warmed, and whose purse has been already drawn in behalf of the one, is a likelier subject for an application in behalf of the other, than he whose money is still untouched, but whose heart is untouched also.

13. It will be seen then, that the Bible Society is not barely defensible, but may be pled for upon that very ground on which its enemies have raised their opposition to it. Its immediate object is neither to feed the hungry nor to clothe the naked, but in every country under the benefit of its exertions, there will be less hunger to feed, and less nakedness to clothe. It does not cure actual poverty, but it anticipates eventful poverty. It aims its decisive thrust at the heart and principle of the mischief, and instead of suffering it to form into the obstinacy of an inextir-

pable disease, it smothers and destroys it in the infancy of its first elements. The love which worketh no ill to his neighbour will not suffer the true Christian to live in idleness upon another's bounty: and he will do as Paul did before him, he will labour with his hands rather than be burdensome. Could we reform the improvident habits of the people, and pour the healthful infusion of Scripture principle into their hearts, it would reduce the existing poverty of the land to a very humble fraction of its present extent. We make bold to say, that in ordinary times there is not one-tenth of the pauperism of England due to unavoidable misfortune. It has grown out of a vicious and impolitic system, and the millions which are raised every year have only served to nourish and extend it. Now, the Bible Society is a prime agent in the work of counteracting this disorder. Its mode of proceeding carries in it all the cheapness and all the superior efficacy of a preventive operation. With a revenue not equal to the poor-rates of many a county, it is doing more even for the secular interests of the poor than all the charities of England united; and while a palling and injudicious sympathy is pouring out its complaints against it, it is sowing the seeds of character and independence, and rearing for future days the spectacle of a thriving, substantial, and well-conditioned peasantry.

14. I have hitherto been supposing, that the rich only are the givers, but I now call on the poor to be sharers in this work of charity. It is true, that of these poor there are some who depend on charity for their subsistence, and these have no right to give what they receive from others. And there are some

t arrived at this state of dependence, but the very verge of it. Let us keep back no he uth from them, "If any provide not for , a specially for those of his own house, he nied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." are others again, and these I apprehend form the most numerous class of society, who can mselves in humble, but honest indepen- spare a little and not feel it, who can t Paul advises,* lay aside their penny a week d hath prospered them, who can share that ss which the Saviour spoke of when he said, more blessed to give than to receive; who, ey cannot equal their rich neighbours in of their donation, can bestow their something, and can, at all events, carry in their bosom a heart as warm to the cause, and call down as precious a blessing from the God who witnesses it. The Bible Society is opposed on the ground of its diverting a portion of relief from the secular necessities of the poor, even when the rich only are called upon to support it. When the application for support is brought down to the poor themselves, and instead of the recipients, it is proposed to make them the dispensers of charity, we may lay our account with the opposition being still more clamorous.—We undertake to prove, that this opposition is founded on a fallacy, and that, by interesting the great mass of a parish in the Bible Society, and assembling them into a penny association for the support of it, you raise a defence against the extension of pauperism.

* 1 Corinthians xvi, 2.

15. We feel a difficulty in this undertaking, not from any uncertainty which hangs over the principle, but from the difficulty of bringing forward a plain and popular exhibition of it. However familiar the principle may be to a student of political science, it carries in it an air of paradox to the multitude, and it were well if this air of paradox were the only obstacle to its reception. But to the children of poesy and fine sentiment, the principle in question carries in it an air of barbarity also, and all the rigour of a pure and impregnable argument has not been able to protect the conclusions of Malthus from their clamorous indignation. There is a kind of hurrying sensibility about them which allows neither time nor temper for listening to any calculation on the subject, and there is not a more striking vanity under the sun, than that the substantial interests of the poor have suffered less from the malignant and the unfeeling, than from those who give without wisdom and who feel without consideration :

> Blessed is he that *wisely* doth
> The poor man's case *consider*.

16. Let me put the case of two parishes, in the one of which there is a known and public endowment, out of which an annual sum is furnished for the maintenance of the poor ; and that in the other there is no such endowment. At the outset, the poor of the first parish may be kept in greater comfort than the poor of the second ; but it is the lesson of all experience, that no annual sum, however great, will be able to keep them permanently in greater comfort.

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17. In the second parish, the economical habits of the people are kept unimpaired, and just because their economy is forced to take a higher aim, and to persevere in it. The aim of the first people is to provide for themselves a part of their maintenance: The aim of the second people is to provide for themselves their whole maintenance. We do not deny, that even among the latter we will meet with distress and poverty, just such distress and such poverty as are to be found in the average of Scottish parishes. This finds its alleviation in private benevolence. To alleviate poverty is all that can be done for it; to extinguish it, we fear is hopeless. Sure we are, that the known and regular provisions of England will never extinguish it, and that, in respect of the poor themselves, the second parish is under a better system than the first. The poor-rates are liable to many exceptions, but there is none of them more de-

cisive with him who cares for the eternity of the poor, than the temptation they hold out to positive guilt, the guilt of not working with their own hands, and so becoming burdensome to others.*

18. Let us conceive a political change in the circumstances of the country, and that the public charity of the first parish fell among the ruin of other institutions. Then its malignant influence would be felt in all its extent; and it would be seen, that it, in fact, had impoverished those whom it professed to sustain, that it had stript them of a possession far more valuable than all it had ever given, that it had stripped them of industrious habits, and left those whom its influence never reached wealthier in the resources of their own superior industry, than the artificial provisions of an unwise and meddling benevolence could ever make them.

19. The comparison between these two parishes paves the way for another comparison. Let me now put the case of a third parish, where a Bible Association is instituted, and where the simple regulation of a penny a week throws it open to the bulk of the people. What effect has this upon their economical habits? It just throws them at a greater distance from the thriftlessness which prevails in the first parish, and leads them to strike a higher aim in the way of economy than the people of the second. The general aim of economy in humble life is to keep even with the world; but it is known to every man at all familiar with that class of society, that the great majority may strike their aim a little higher, and in point of fact, have it in their power to redeem an

* Acts xx. 35. 1 Timothy v. 8.

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sum was obtained from them, even though a compulsory tax were the instrument of raising it.* This assimilation of our plan to a tax may give rise to a world of impetuous declamation, but let it ever be remembered, that the institution of a Bible Society gives you the whole benefit of such a tax without its odiousness. It brings up their economy to a higher pitch, but it does so, not in the way which they resist, but in the way which they choose. The single circumstance of its being a *voluntary* act, forms the defence and the answer to all the clamours of an affected sympathy. You take from the poor. No! they give. You take beyond their ability. Of this they are the best judges. You abridge their comforts. No! there is a comfort in

* I must here suppose the sum to be a stated one, and a feeling of security on the part of the people, that the tax shall not be subject to variation at the caprice of an arbitrary government.

the exercise of charity: there is a comfort in the act of lending a hand to a noble enterprise: there is a comfort in the contemplation of its progress: there is a comfort in rendering a service to a friend, and when that friend is the Saviour, and that service the circulation of the message he left behind him, it is a comfort which many of the poor are ambitious to share in. Leave them to judge of their comfort, and if in point of fact, they do give their penny a week to a Bible Society, it just speaks them to have more comfort in this way of spending it than in any other which occurs to them.

21. Perhaps it does not occur to those friends of the poor while they are sitting in judgment on their circumstances and feelings, how unjustly and how unworthily they think of them. They do not conceive how truth and benevolence can be at all objects to them, and suppose, that after they have got the meet to feed, the house to shelter, the raiment to cover them, there is nothing else that they will bestow a penny upon. They may not be able to express their feelings on a suspicion so ungenerous, but I shall do it for them: "We have souls as well as you, and precious to our hearts is the Saviour who died for them. It is true we have our distresses, but these have bound us more firmly to our Bibles, and it is the desire of our hearts, that a gift so precious, should be sent to the poor of other countries. The word of God is our hope and our rejoicing; we desire that it may be theirs also, that the wandering savage may know it and be glad, and the poor negro, under the lash of his master, may be told of a Master in heaven who is full of pity, and full of kindness.

think that sympathy for such as these is your
ribute? Know that our hearts are made
same materials with your own, that we can feel
as you, and out of the earnings of a hard and
est industry, we shall give an offering to the
nor shall we cease our exertions till the
e of salvation be carried round the globe, and
known to the countless millions who live in
and who die in darkness."

And here it is obvious that a superior habit of economy is not the only defence which the Bible iety raises against pauperism. The smallness of sum contributed may give a littleness to this ument, but not, let it be remembered, without ng an equal littleness to the objection of those who declaim against the institution, on the ground of its oppressiveness to the poor contributors. The great defence which such a Society establishes against pauperism, is the superior tone of dignity and independence which it imparts to the character of him who supports it. He stands on the high ground of being a dispenser of charity; and before he can submit to become a recipient of charity, he must let himself farther down than a poor man in ordinary circumstances. To him the transition will be more violent, and the value of this principle will be acknowledged by all who perceive that it is reluctance on the part of the poor man to become a pauper, which forms the mighty barrier against the extension of pauperism. A man by becoming the member of a benevolent association, puts himself into the situation of a giver. He stands at a greater distance than before from the situation of a receiver. He has a

wider interval to traverse before he can reach this point. He will feel it a greater degradation, and to save himself from it, he will put forth all his powers of frugality and exertion. The idea of restraining pauperism by external administrations, seems now to be generally abandoned. But could we thus enter into the hearts of the poor, we would get in at the root of the mischief, and by fixing there a habit of economy and independence, more would be done for them, than by all the liberalities of all the opulent.

23. In those districts of Scotland where poor-rates are unknown, the descending avenue which leads to pauperism is powerfully guarded by the stigma which attaches to it. Remove this stigma, and our cottagers, now rich in the possession of contentment and industry, would resign their habits, and crowd into the avenue by thousands. The shame of descending, is the powerful stimulus which urges them to contest it manfully with the difficulties of their situation, and which bears them through in all the pride of honest independence. Talk of this to the people of the South, and it sounds in their ears like an Arcadian story. But there is not a clergyman among us who has not witnessed the operation of the principle in all its fineness, and in all its moral delicacy; and surely a testimony is due to those village heroes who so nobly struggle with the difficulties of pauperism, that they may shun and surmount its degradation.

24. A Bible Association gives additional vigour and buoyancy to this elevated principle. The trifle which it exacts from its contributor is in truth never missed by him, but it puts him in the high attitude of

a giver, and every feeling which it inspires, is on the side of independence and delicacy. Go over each of these feelings separately, and you find that they are all fitted to fortify his dislike at the shame and dependence of pauperism. There is a consciousness of importance which unavoidably attaches to the share he has taken in the support and direction of a public charity. There is the expanding effect of the information which comes to him through the medium of the circulated reports, which lays before him the mighty progress of an institution reaching to all countries, and embracing in its ample grasp, the men of all latitudes and all languages, which deeply interests him in the object, and perpetuates his desire of promoting it. A man with his heart so occupied, and his attention so directed, is not capable of a voluntary descent to pauperism. He has in fact become a more cultivated and intellectual being than formerly. His mind gathers an enlargement from the wide and animating contemplations which are set before him, and we appeal to the reflection of every reader, if such a man will descend as readily to a dependence on the charity of others, as he whose mind is void of information, and whose feelings are void of dignity.

25. In such associations, the rich and the poor meet together. They share in one object, and are united by the sympathy of one feeling, and of one interest. We have not to look far into human nature to be convinced of the happy and the harmonizing influence which this must have upon society, and how in the glow of one common cordiality, all asperity and discontent must give way to the kindlier principles of our nature. The days have been,

when the very name of an association carried terror and suspicion along with it.—In a Bible Association there is nothing which our rulers need to be afraid of, and they may rest assured, that the moral influence of such institutions is all on the side of peace and loyalty. But to confine myself to the present argument. Who does not see that they exalt the general tone and character of our people, that they bring them nearer to the dignity of superior and cultivated life, and that therefore, though their direct aim is not to mitigate poverty, they go a certain way to dry up the most abundant of its sources.

26. Let me add, that the direct influence of Bible principles is inseparable from a zeal for the circulation of the Bible. It is not to be conceived, that anxiety for sending it to others can exist, while there is no reverence for it among ourselves, and we appeal to those districts where such associations have been formed, if a more visible attention to the Bible, and a more serious impression of its authority, is not the consequence of them. Now the lessons of this Bible are all on the side of industry. They tell us that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that therefore, a man, who, by his own voluntary idleness is brought under the necessity of receiving, has disinherited himself of a blessing. The poor must have bread, but the Bible commands and exhorts, that wherever it is possible, that bread should be *their own*, and that all who are able should make it their own by working for it.* No precept can be devised which bears more directly on the source of pauperism. The minister, who, in his faithful expo-

* 2 Thessalonians iii. 12.

sition of the Bible, urged this precept successfully upon his people, would do much to extinguish pauperism among them. It is true that he does not always urge successfully; but surely if success is to be more looked for in one quarter than in another, it is among the pious and intelligent peasantry whom he has assembled around him, whom he has formed into a little society for the circulation of the Bible, and whose feelings he has interested in this purest and worthiest of causes.

27. Nor is the operation of this principle confined to the actual contributor. We have no doubt that it has been beautifully exemplified even among those, who, unable to give their penny a week, either stand on the very verge of pauperism, or have got within its limits. They are unable to give any thing of their own, but they may be able at the same time to forego the wonted allowance which they received from another, or a part of it. The refusals of the poor to take an offered charity, or to take the whole amount of the offer, are quite familiar to a Scottish clergyman; and the plea on which they set the refusal, that it would be taking from others who are even needier than they, entitles them when honestly advanced to all the praise of benevolence. A spirit of pious attachment to the Bible would prompt a refusal of the same kind. You have other and higher claims upon you; you have the spiritual necessities of the world to provide for, and that you may be the more able to make the provision, leave me to the frugality of my own management. In this way the principle descends, and carries its healthful influence into the very regions of pauperism. It is the only principle

competent to its extirpation. The obvious expedient of a positive supply to meet the wants of existing poverty, has failed, and the poor-rates of England will ever be a standing testimony to the utter inefficiency of this expedient, which, instead of killing the disease, has rooted and confirmed it. Try the other expedient then. The remedy against the extension of pauperism does not lie in the liberalities of the rich. It lies in the hearts and habits of the poor. Plant in their bosoms a principle of independence. Give a higher tone of delicacy to their characters. Teach them to recoil from pauperism as a degradation. The degradation may at times be unavoidable, but the thing which gives such alarming extent to the mischief, is the debasing influence of poor-rates, whereby, in the vast majority of instances, the degradation is voluntary. But if there be an exalting influence in Bible Associations to counteract this, if they foster a right spirit of importance; above all, if they secure a readier submission to the lessons of the volume which they are designed to circulate, who does not see, that in proportion as they are multiplied and extended over the face of the country, they carry along with them the most effectual regimen for preventing the extension of poverty.

28. And here it may be asked, if it be at all likely that these Associations will extend to such a degree as to have a sensible influence upon the habits of the country? Nothing more likely. A single individual of influence in each parish, would make the system universal. In point of fact it is making progress every month, and such is the wonderful spirit of exertion which is now abroad, that in a few years

every little district of the land may become the seat of a Bible Society. We are now upon the dawn of very high anticipations, and the wholesome effect upon the habits and principles of the people at home, is not the least of them. That part of the controversy which relates to the direct merits of the Bible Society may be looked upon as already exhausted;* and could the objection, founded on its interference with the relief of the poor, be annihilated, or still more, could it be converted into a positive argument in its behalf, we are not aware of a single remaining plea upon which a rational or benevolent man can refuse his concurrence to it.

29. And the plea of conceived injury to the poor deserves to be attended to. It wears an amiable complexion, and we believe, that in some instances, a real sympathy with their distresses, lies at the bottom of it. Let sympathy be guided by consideration. It is the part of a Christian to hail benevolence in all its forms; but when a plan is started for the relief of the destitute, is he to be the victim of a popular and sentimental indignation, because he ventures to take up the question whether the plan be really an effective one? We know that in various towns of Scotland you meet with two distinct Penny Societies, one a Bible Association, the other for the relief of the indigent. It is to be regretted that there should ever

* See Dealtry's pamphlets. Letter from the late Dr. Murray, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Edinburgh, to Dr. Charles Stuart. Steinkoff's Tour on the Continent. Edinburgh Review, vol. xix. p. 39; and above all, the reports and summaries of the institution itself, where you will meet with a cloud of testimonies from Moravians, Missionaries, Roman Catholics, the Literati of our chief European towns, and men of piety and public spirit in all quarters of the world.

be any jealousy between them, but we believe, that agreeably to what we have already said, it will often be found that the one suggested the other, and that the supporters of the former, are the most zealous, and active, and useful friends of the latter. We cannot however suppress the fact, that there is now a growing apprehension lest the growth of the latter Societies should break down the delicacies of the lower orders, and pave the way for a permanent introduction of poor-rates. There is a pretty general impression, that the system may be carried too far, and the uncertainty as to the precise limit has given the feeling to many who have embarked with enthusiasm, that they are now engaged in a ticklish and questionable undertaking. I do not attempt either to confirm or to refute this impression, but I count it a piece of justice to the associations I am pleading for, to assert, that they stand completely free of every such exception. The Bible Society is making steady advances towards the attainment of its object, and the sure effect of multiplying its subscribers is to conduct it in a shorter time to the end of its labours. A Society for the relief of temporal necessities is grasping at an object that is completely unattainable, and the mischief is, that the more known, and the more extensive, and the more able it becomes, it is sure to be more counted on, and at last, to create more poverty than it provides for. The Bible Society aims at making every land a land of Bibles, and this aim it will accomplish after it has translated the Bible into all languages, and distributed a sample large enough to create a native and universal

demand for them.* After the people of the world have acquired such a taste for the Bible, and such a sense of its value as to purchase it for themselves, the Society terminates its career, and instead of the corruptions and abuses which other charities scatter in their way, it leaves the poor to whom it gives, more enlightened, and the poor from whom it takes, more elevated, than it found them.

30. 'Charity,' says Shakspeare, 'is twice blest. It blesses him who gives, and him who takes.' This is far from being universally true. There is a blessing annexed to the heart which deviseth liberal things. Perhaps the founder of the English poor-rates acquired this blessing, but the indolence and depravity which they have been the instrument of spreading over the face of the country, are incalculable. If we wish to see the assertion of the poet realised in its full extent, go to such a charity as we are now pleading for, where the very exercise of giving on the one hand and the instruction received on the other, have the effect of narrowing the limits of pauperism, by creating a more virtuous and dignified population.

31. There is poverty to be met with in every land, and we are ready to admit, that a certain proportion of it is due to unavoidable misfortune. But it is no less true, that in those countries where there is a known and established provision for the necessities of the poor, the greater proportion of the poverty

* But this native demand never will be created without the exertion of Missionaries, and the above reasoning applies, in its most important parts, to Missionary Associations. *See Appendix.*

which exists in them is due to the debasing influence of a public charity on the habits of the people. The institution we are pleading for counteracts this influence. It does not annihilate all poverty, but it tends to annihilate the greater part of it. It arrests the progress of the many who were making a voluntary descent to pauperism, and it leaves none to be provided for but the few who have honestly struggled against their distresses, and have struggled in vain.

32. And how shall they be provided for? You may erect a public institution. This in fact is the same with erecting a signal of invitation, and the voluntary and self-created poor will rush in, to the exclusion of those modest and unobtrusive poor who are the genuine objects of charity. This is the never failing mischief of a known and established provision,* and it has been sadly exemplified in England. The only method of doing away the mischief is to confide the relief of the poor to individual benevolence. This draws no dependence along with it. It is not counted upon like a public and proclaimed charity. It brings the claims of the poor under the discriminating eye of a neighbour, who will make a difference between a case of genuine helplessness, and a case of idleness or misconduct. It turns the tide of benevolence into its true channel, and it will ever be found, that under its operation, the poverty

* We must here except all those institutions, the object of which is to provide for involuntary distress, such as hospitals, and dispensaries, and asylums for the lunatic or the blind. A man may resign himself to idleness, and become wilfully poor, that he may eat of the public bread, but he will not become wilfully sick or maimed that he may receive medicines from a dispensary, or undergo an operation in an hospital.

of misfortune is better seen to, and the poverty of improvidence and guilt is more effectually prevented.

33. My concluding observation then is, that the extension of Bible Societies, while it counteracts in various directions the mischief of poor-rates, augments that principle of individual benevolence which is the best substitute for poor-rates. You add to the stock of individual benevolence, by adding to the number of benevolent individuals, and this is the genuine effect of a Bible Association. Or, you add to the stock of individual benevolence in a country, by adding to the intensity of the benevolent principle, and this is the undoubted tendency of a Bible Association.* And what is of mighty importance in this argument, a Bible Association not only awakens the benevolent principle, but it enlightens it. It establishes an intercourse between the various orders of society, and on no former occasion in the history of this country, have the rich and the poor come so often together upon a footing of good will. The kindly influence of this is incalculable. It brings the poor under the eye of their richer neighbours. The visits and inquiries connected with the objects of the Bible Society, bring them into contact with one another. The rich come to be more skilled in the wants and difficulties of the poor, and by entering their houses, and joining with them in conversation, they not only acquire a benevolence towards them, but they gather that knowledge which is so essential to guide and enlighten their benevolence.

* Sec. 9.

APPENDIX.

It is evident, that the above reasoning applies, in its chief parts, to benevolent Associations, instituted for any other religious purpose. It is not necessary to restrict the argument to the case of Bible Associations. I should be sorry if the Bible Society were to engross the religious benevolence of the public, and if, in the multiplication of its auxiliaries over the face of the country, it were to occupy the whole ground, and leave no room for the great and important claims of other institutions.

Of this I conceive that there is little danger. The revenue of each of these Societies is founded upon voluntary contributions, and what is voluntary may be withdrawn or transferred to other objects. I may give both to a Bible and a Missionary Society, or if I can only afford to give to one, I may select either, according to my impression of their respective claims. In this way a vigilant and discerning public will suit its benevolence to the urgency of the case, and it is evident, that each institution can employ the same methods for obtaining patronage and support. Each can, and does bring forward a yearly statement of its claims and necessities. Each has the same access to the public through the medium of the pulpit or the press. Each can send its advocates over the face of the country, and every individual, forming his own estimate of their respective claims, will apportion his benevolence accordingly.

Now what is done by an individual, may be done by every such Association as I am now pleading for. Its members may sit in judgment on the various schemes of utility which are now in operation, and though originally formed as an auxiliary to the Bible Society, it may keep itself open to other calls, and occasionally give of its funds

to Missionaries, or Moravians, or the Society for Gaelic Schools, or the African Institution, or to the Jewish, and Baptist, and Hibernian, and Lancasterian Societies.

In point of fact, the subordinate Associations of the country are tending towards this arrangement, and it is a highly beneficial arrangement. It carries in it a most salutary control over all these various institutions, each labouring to maintain itself in reputation with the public, and to secure the countenance of this great Patron. Indolence and corruption may lay hold of an endowed charity, but when the charity depends upon public favour, a few glaring examples of mismanagement would annihilate it.

During a few of the first years of the Bible Society, the members of other Societies were alarmed at the rapid extension of its popularity, and expressed their fears lest it should engross all the attention and benevolence of the religious public.—But the reverse has happened, and a principle made use of in the body of this pamphlet may be well illustrated by the history of this matter. [Sec. 9.] The Bible Society has drawn a great yearly sum of money from the public, and the first impression was, that it would exhaust the fund for religious charities. But while it drew money from the hand, it sent a fresh and powerful excitement of Christian benevolence into the heart, and under the influence of this creative principle, the fund has extended to such a degree, as not only to meet the demands of the new Society, but to yield a more abundant revenue to the older Societies than ever. We believe that the excitement goes much farther than this, and that many a deed of ordinary charity could be traced to the impulse of the cause we are pleading for. We hazard the assertion, that many thousands of those who contribute to the Bible Society, find in themselves a greater readiness to every good work, since the period of their connexion with it, and that in the wholesome channel of individual benevolence, more hunger

is fed, and more nakedness clothed throughout the land, than at any period anterior to the formation of our Religious Societies.

The alarm, grounded upon the tendency of these Societies with their vast revenues, to impoverish the country, is ridiculous. If ever their total revenue shall amount to a sum which can make it worthy of consideration to an enlightened economist at all, it may be proved that it trenches upon no national interest whatever, that it leaves population and Public Revenue on precisely the same footing of extent and prosperity in which it found them, and that it interferes with no one object which Patriot or Politician needs to care for. In the mean time it may suffice to state, that the income of all the Bible and Missionary Societies in the island, would not do more than defray the annual maintenance of one ship of the line.—When put by the side of the millions which are lavished without a sigh, on the enterprises of war, it is nothing; and shall this veriest trifle be grudged to the advancement of a cause, which, when carried to its accomplishment, will put an end to war, and banish all its passions and atrocities from the world?

I should be sorry if Penny Associations were to bind themselves down to the support of the Bible Society. I should like to see them exercising a judgment over the numerous claims which are now before the public, and giving occasionally of their funds to other religious institutions. The effect of this very exercise would be to create a liberal and well-informed peasantry, to open a wider sphere to their contemplations, and to raise the standard, not merely of piety, but of general intelligence among them. The diminution of pauperism is only part of the general effect which the multiplication of these Societies will bring about in the country; and if my limits allowed me, I might expatiate on their certain influence in raising the tone and character of the British population.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

FOR PROPAGATING

CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

(INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER,)

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

IN THE

HIGH CHURCH OF EDINBURGH,

ON THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1814.

BY

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.
Minister of the Tron Church,
GLASGOW.

SOCIETY HALL, JUNE 2, 1814.

At a general meeting of the SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR PROPAGATING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

JAMES ROBERTSON, Esq. Clerk to the Signet,
In the Chair,

(In absence of the Right Hon. FRANCIS LORD SEAFORTH, President.)

The thanks of the Society were given from the Chair, to the Reverend THOMAS CHALMERS, of Kilmany, for his excellent Sermon, this day preached before them; and he was requested to permit his manuscript to be printed, for the benefit of the Society.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Secretary.

SERMON.

JOHN i. 46.

And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

THE principle of association, however useful in the main, has a blinding and misleading effect in many instances. Give it a wide enough field of induction to work upon, and it will carry you to a right conclusion upon any one case or question that comes before you. But the evil is, that it often carries you forward with as much confidence upon a limited, as upon an enlarged field of experience, and the man of narrow views will, upon a few paltry individual recollections, be as obstinate in the assertion of his own maxim, and as boldly come forward with his own sweeping generality, as if the whole range of nature and observation had been submitted to him.

To aggravate the mischief, the opinion thus formed upon the specialities of his own limited experience, obtains a holding and a tenacity in his mind, which dispose him to resist all the future facts and instances that come before him. Thus it is that the opinion becomes a prejudice; and that no statement, however true or however impressive, will be able to dislodge it. You may accumulate facts upon facts, but the opinion he has already formed, has acquired a certain right of pre-occupancy over him. It is the

law of the mind which, like the similar law of society, often carries it over the original principles of justice; and it is this which gives so strong a positive influence to error, and makes its overflow so very slow and laborious an operation.

I know not the origin of the prejudice respecting the town of Nazareth; or what it was that gave rise to an aphorism of such sweeping universality, as that no good thing could come out of it. Perhaps in two, three, or more instances, individuals may have come out of it who threw a discredit over the place of their nativity by the profligacy of their actions. Hence an association between the very name of the town, and the villany of its inhabitants. The association forms into an opinion. The opinion is embodied into a proverb, and is transmitted in the shape of a hereditary prejudice to future generations. It is likely enough, that many instances could have been appealed to, of people from the town of Nazareth, who gave evidence in their characters and lives against the prejudice in question. But it is not enough that evidence be offered by the one party. It must be attended to by the other. The disposition to resist it must be got over. The love of truth and justice must prevail over that indolence which likes to repose, without disturbance, in its present convictions; and over that malignity which, I fear, makes a dark and hostile impression of others, too congenial to many hearts. Certain it is, that when the strongest possible demonstration was offered in the person of him who was the finest example of the good and fair, it was found that the inveteracy of the prejudice could withstand it; and it is to be

shared that with the question, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" There were many in that day who shut their eyes and their affections against him.

Thus it was that the very name of a town, fastened an association of prejudice upon all its inhabitants. But this is only one example out of the many. A sect may be thrown into discredit by a very few of its individual specimens, and the same association be fastened upon all its members. A society may be thrown into discredit by the failure of one or two of its undertakings, and this will be enough to entail suspicion and ridicule upon all its future operations. A system may be thrown into discredit by the fanaticism and folly of some of its advocates, and it may be long before it emerges from the contempt of a precipitate and unthinking public, ever ready to follow the impulse of her former recollections; it may be long before it is reclaimed from obscurity by the eloquence of future defenders; and there may be the struggle and the perseverance of many years before the existing association, with all its train of obloquies, and disgusts, and prejudices, shall be overthrown.

A lover of truth is thus placed on the right field for the exercise of his principles. It is the field of his faith and of his patience, and in which he is called to a manly encounter with the enemies of his cause. He may have much to bear, and little but the mere force of principle to uphold him. But what a noble exhibition of mind, when this force is enough for it; when, though unsupported by the sympathy of other minds, it can rest on the truth and righteousness of its own principle; when it can select its object from

among the thousand entanglements of error, and keep by it amidst all the clamours of hostility and contempt; when all the terrors of disgrace cannot alarm it; when all the levities of ridicule cannot shame it; when all the scowl of opposition cannot overwhelm it.

There are some very fine examples of such a contest, and of such a triumph, in the history of Philosophy. In the progress of speculation, the doctrine of the *occult qualities* fell into disrepute, and every thing that could be associated with such a doctrine was disgraced and borne down by the authority of the reigning school. When Sir Isaac Newton's Theory of Gravitation was announced to the world, if it had not the persecution of violence, it had at least the persecution of contempt to struggle with. It had the sound of an occult principle, and it was charged with all the bigotry and mysticism of the schoolmen. This kept it out for a time from the chairs and universities of Europe, and for years a kind of obscure and ignoble sectarianism was annexed to that name, which has been carried down on such a tide of glory to distant ages. Let us think of this, when Philosophers bring their names and their authority to bear upon us, when they pour contempt on the truth which we love, and on the system which we defend; and as they fasten their epithets upon us, let us take comfort in thinking that we are under the very ordeal through which Philosophy herself had to pass, before she achieved the most splendid of her victories.

Sure I am, that the Philosophers of that age could not have a more impetuous contempt for the occult principle, which they conceived to lie in the doctrine

of gravitation, than many of our present philosophers have for the equally occult principle which they conceive to lie in the all-subduing efficacy of the Christian Faith over every mind which embraces it. Each of these two doctrines is mighty in its pretensions. The one, asserts a principle to be now in operation, and which, reigning over the material world, gives harmony to all its movements. The other, asserts a principle which it wants to put into operation, to apply to all minds, to carry round the globe, and to visit with its influence all the accessible dominions or the moral world. Mighty anticipation! It promises to rectify all disorder, to extirpate all vice, to dry up the source of all those sins, and sufferings, and sorrows, which have spread such dismal and unseemly ravages over the face of society, to turn every soul from satan unto God; or in other words, to annihilate that disturbing force which has jarred the harmony of the moral world, and make all its parts tend obediently to the Deity as its centre and its origin.

But how can this principle be put into operation? How shall it be brought into contact with a soul at the distance of a thousand miles from the place in which we are now standing? I know no other conceivable way than sending a messenger in possession of the principle himself, and able to convey it into the mind of another by his powers of communication. The precept of "Go and preach the Gospel unto every creature," would obtain a very partial obedience indeed, if there was no actual moving of the preacher from one place or neighbourhood to another. Were he to stand still he might preach to some

centures; he might get a smaller or a larger number to assemble around him, and it is to be hoped that from the stationary pulpits of a Christian country the preaching of the word has been made to bear with efficacy on the souls of multitudes. But in reference to the vast majority of the world, that may still be said which was said by an Apostle in the infant state of our religion, how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent? It is the single circumstance of being sent, which forms the peculiarity so much contended for by one part of the British public, and so much resisted by the other. The Preacher who is so sent is, in good Latin, termed a *Missionary*; and such is the magical power which lies in the very sound of this hateful and obnoxious term, that it is no sooner uttered than a thousand associations of dislike and prejudice start into existence. And yet you would think it very strange: The term itself is perfectly correct, in point of etymology. Many of those who are so clamorous in their hostility against it, feel no contempt for the mere act of preaching, sit with all decency and apparent seriousness under it, and have a becoming respect for the character of a preacher. Convert the Preacher into a Missionary, and all you have done is merely to graft upon the man's preaching the circumstance of locomotion. How comes it that the talent, and the eloquence, and the principle, which appeared so respectable in your eyes, so long as they stood still, lose all their respectability so soon as they begin to move? It is certainly conceivable, that the personal qualities which bear with salutary *influence* upon the human beings of one place, may

pass unimpaired and have the same salutary influence upon the human beings of another. But this is a missionary process, and though unable to bring forward any substantial exception against the thing, they cannot get the better of the disgust excited by the term. They cannot release their understanding from the influence of its old associations, and these Philosophers are repelled from truth, and frightened out of the way which leads to it, by the bugbear of a name.

The precept is, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven." The people I allude to have no particular quarrel with the *preach*; but they have a mortal antipathy to the *go*—and should even their own admired preacher offer to go himself, or help to send others, he becomes a missionary, or the advocate of a mission; and the question of my text is set up in resistance to the whole scheme, "Can any good thing come out of it?"

I never felt myself in more favourable circumstances for giving an answer to the question, than I do at this moment, surrounded as I am by the members of a Society, which has been labouring for upwards of a century in the field of missionary exertion. It need no longer be taken up or treated as a speculative question. The question of the text may, in reference to the subject now before us, be met immediately by the answer of the text, "Come and see." We call upon you to look to a set of actual performances, to examine the record of past doings, and like good philosophers as you are, to make the sober depositions of history carry it over the reveries of imagination and prejudice. We deal in proofs, not in prem-

ises; in practice, not in profession; in experience, and not in experiment. The Society whose cause I am now appointed to plead in your hearing, is to all intents and purposes a Missionary Society. It has a claim to all the honour, and must just submit to all the disgrace which such a title carries along with it. It has been in the habit for many years of hiring preachers and teachers, and may be convicted times without number, of the act of sending them to a distance. What the precise distance is I do not understand to be of any signification to the argument; but even though it should, I fear that in the article of distance, our Society has at times been as extravagant as many of her neighbours. Her labours have been met with in other quarters of the world. They have been found among the haunts of savages. They have dealt with men in the very infancy of social improvement, and their zeal for proselytism has far outstript that sober preparatory management, which is so much contended for. Why, they have carried the Gospel message into climes on which Europe had never impressed a single trace of her boasted civilization. They have tried the species in the first stages of its rudeness and ferocity, nor did they keep back the offer of the Saviour from their souls, till art and industry had performed a sufficient part, and were made to administer in fuller abundance to the wants of their bodies. This process, which has been so much insisted upon, they did not wait for. They preached and they prayed at the very outset, and they put into exercise all the weapons of their spiritual ministry. In a word, they have done all the fanatical and offensive things, which have been

charged upon other missionaries. If there be folly in such enterprises as these, our Society has the accumulated follies of a whole century upon her forehead. She is among the vilest of the vile, and the same overwhelming ridicule which has thrown the mantle of ignominy over other Societies, will lay all her honours and pretensions in the dust.

We are not afraid of linking the claims of our Society with the general merits of the Missionary cause. With this cause she stands or falls. When the spirit of Missionary enterprise is afloat in the country, she will not be neglected among the multiplicity of other objects. She will not suffer from the number or the activity of kindred Societies. They who conceive alarm upon this ground, have not calculated upon the productive powers of benevolence. They have not meditated deeply upon the operation of this principle, nor do they conceive how a general impulse given to the Missionary spirit, may work the two fold effect of multiplying the number of Societies, and of providing for each of them more abundantly than ever.

The fact is undeniable. In this corner of the empire there is an impetuous and overbearing contempt for every thing connected with the name of Missionary. The cause has been outraged by a thousand indecencies. Every thing like the coolness of the philosophical spirit has been banished from one side of the controversy, and all the epithets of disgrace, which a perverted ingenuity could devise, have been unsparingly lavished on the noblest benefactors of the species. We have reason to believe that this opposition is not so extensive, nor so virulent in Eng-

land. It is due to certain provincial associations, and may be accounted for. It is most a Scottish peculiarity; and while, with our neighbours in the South, it is looked upon as a liberal and enlightened cause; as a branch of that very principle which abolished the Slave Trade of Africa; as one of the wisest, and likeliest experiments, which in this age of benevolent enterprise, is now making for the interests of the world; as a scheme ennobled by the patronage of royalty; supported by the contributions of opulence; sanctified by the prayers and the wishes of philanthropy; assisted by men of the first science, and the first scholarship; carrying into execution by as hardy adventurers as ever trod the desert in quest of novelty; and enriching grammar, geography, and natural knowledge, by the discoveries they are making every year, as to the statistics of all countries, and the peculiarities of all languages; while, I say, such are the dignified associations thrown around the missionary cause in England; in this country I am sorry to say a very different set of collaterals is annexed to it. A great proportion of our nobility, gentry, and clergy look upon it as a very low and drivelling concern; as a visionary enterprize, and that no good thing can come out of it; as a mere dreg of sectarianism, and which none but sectarians, or men who should have been sectarians, have any relish or respect for. The torrent of prejudice runs strongly against it, and the very name of Missionary excites the most nauseous antipathy, in the hearts of many, who, in other departments, approve themselves to be able, and candid, and reflecting inquirers.

We have no doubt that in the course of years all this will pass away. But reason and experience are slow in their operation; and, in the mean time, we count it fair to neutralize, if possible, one prejudice by another; to school down a Scottish antipathy by a Scottish predilection, and to take shelter from the contempt that is now so wantonly pouring on the best of causes under the respected name of a Society, which has earned by the services of a hundred years, the fairest claims on the gratitude and veneration of all our countrymen. Come, and see the effect of her Missionary exertions. It is palpable, and near at hand. It lies within the compass of many a summer tour; and tell me, ye children of fancy, who expatiate with a delighted eye over the wilds of our mountain scenery, if it be not a dearer and a worthier exercise still, to contemplate the habits of her once ragged and wandering population. What would they have been at this moment, had Schools, and Bibles, and Ministers, been kept back from them? and had the men of a century ago been deterred by the flippancies of the present age, from the work of planting chapels and seminaries in that neglected land? The ferocity of their ancestors would have come down unsoftened and unsubdued to the existing generation. The darkening spirit of hostility would still have lowered upon us from the North; and these plains, now so peaceful and so happy, would have lain open to the fury of merciless invaders. O ye soft and sentimental travellers, who wander so securely over this romantic land, you are right to choose the season when the angry elements of nature are asleep! But what is it that has charm-

ed to their long repose the more dreadful elements of human passion and human injustice? What is it that has quelled the boisterous spirit of her natives?—and while her torrents roar as fiercely, and her mountain brows look as grimly as ever, what is that which has thrown so softening an influence over the minds and manners of her living population?

I know not that there are several causes; but sure I am, that the civilizing influence of our Society has had an important share. If it be true that our country is indebted to her Schools snd her Bibles for the most intelligent and virtuous peasantry in Europe, let it never be forgotten that the Schools in the establishment of our Society are nearly equal to one-third of all the parishes in Scotland; that these schools are chiefly to be met with in the Highland district; that they bear as great a proportion to the Highland population, as all our parochial seminaries do to all our population; or, in other words, had the local convenience for the attendance of scholars been as great as in other parts of the country, the apparatus set a going by our Society, for the education of the Highland peasantry, would have been as effective as the boasted provision of the legislature, for the whole of Scotland.*

* This want of local convenience for the attendance of scholars, is the chief difficulty which our Society has to struggle with. The number of scholars bears to the population the proportion stated in the text; but think of the broad surface of a thinly peopled country, intersected with deep bays, and crossed in every direction by the natural barriers of lakes and mountains. There are only two ways in which education can be carried over the face of a country so peculiarly formed The first way is, by the multiplication of stationary points, from which learning may emanate among the children in distinct neighbourhoods. The second way is, by the

I pass over the attempts of our Society to introduce the knowledge of the arts and the habits of useful industry among them. I have not room for every thing. And to reclaim, if possible, the prejudices of those who I fear have little sympathy with the wants of the ever-during soul, I have been lingering all the while upon the inferior ground of temporal advantage. But I may detain you for hours upon this ground, and after all I have said about a more peaceful neighbourhood, and a more civilized peasantry, I may positively have said nothing upon the essen-

operation of circulating schools, which describe at intervals the blank spaces that are placed beyond the reach of stationary schools. In the present situation of the Highlands, both of these methods are putting into operation; and both are entitled to the support and patronage of the public. But without wishing to withdraw a single farthing from the latter of these methods, no one will deny that the former, if it could be put into operation, is the most effectual, for the full and regular education of the Highlanders. A fixed school, operating at all seasons, will do more for its neighbourhood, than can be done by a moveable apparatus set up only at intervals, and transferring itself at the end of a few months to other scenes, and to other neighbourhoods. Let us aim, therefore, at the multiplication of the fixed points; but a mighty sum will be necessary before such a system is completed; and in the mean time, let not the population of the intermediate spaces be abandoned. Let the cheapest and readiest expedient that offers for their education be adopted, and let the public hold forth a liberal hand to the Society for circulating schools. But what is to hinder us to combine with this, the gradual extension of the system of fixed, and regular education? The parochial schools furnish us with so many fixed points. The Society I am now pleading for, furnish us so many more. The very existence of the Gaelic Society, is a proof both of the extent and multiplicity of those intermediate spaces, over which they are operating with so much efficiency. Now the precise ground upon which we lay claim to the support of the public, is, that we want to scatter a few more stationary schools over these intermediate spaces—not to supersede the labours of the other Society; for the period of time at which this can be possibly accomplished, is still at an indefinite distance from us—but by narrowing the ground of their operation, to enable them to do more complete justice to the mighty remainder, on which they have every prospect of expatiating

tial merits of the cause. I can conceive the wish of his present Majesty, that every one in his dominions may be able to read the Bible, to meet an echo in every bosom. But why? Because the very habit of reading implies a more intelligent people, and must stand associated in every mind with habits of order, and comfort, and decency. But separate these from the religious principle, and what are they? At the very best they are the virtues of a life; their office is to scatter a few fleeting joys over a short and uncertain pilgrimage, and to deck a temporary scene

for years, and generations to come; to make the task more commensurate to their means, and enable them to circulate with greater frequency and effect, over those remoter tracts, which we have as yet no immediate prospect of reaching.

Who would not give all jealousy to the wind, when they see how beautifully suited the operations of these two distinct societies are to one another? Circulate, with all possible activity, among the interjacent spaces on the one hand, but do not give up the prospect of permanent establishments in these spaces, on the other. The last is the province of our Society, and is advanced as our distinct claim upon the generosity of the public. We lay claim to this generosity; and what is more, we stand in need of it. It is not true that we do not teach the Gaelic to our Highland scholars. The instructions given to every Schoolmaster, and the Reports of the Committees of Presbyteries, upon the examination of scholars, form a distinct refutation to the impression which has got abroad upon this subject. Strange that this Society should be charged with a hostility to Gaelic education, to whose exertion and whose patronage the Highlands of Scotland are indebted for the existence of the Gaelic Bible. On the other hand, it is not true that our funds are so ample as to make us independent of any appeals that can be made to the generosity of the public. Our expenditure is at this moment pressing upon our resources. We have done much. There are hundreds of Schools regularly supported by us; but we appeal to the very existence of other Societies for the fact, that we have still much to do. We appeal to the press of applications for more Schools, and more Schoolmasters, and more Salaries. These applications come upon us every year, and the painful necessity we are under of refusing many of them, proves to a demonstration, that the want of pecuniary aid is the only limit to the usefulness of our exertions.

with blessings, which are to perish and be forgotten. No! in our attempts to carry into effect the principle of being all things to all men, let us never exalt that which is subordinate; let us never give up our reckoning upon eternity, or be ashamed to own it as our sentiment, that though schools were to multiply, though Missionaries were to labour, and all the decencies and accomplishments of social life were to follow in their train, the great object would still be unattained, so long as the things of the Holy Spirit were unrelished and undiscerned among them, and they wanted that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is life everlasting. This is the ground upon which every Christian will rest the vindication of every Missionary enterprise; and this is the ground upon which he may expect to be abandoned by the infidel, who laughs at piety: or the lukewarm believer, who dreads to be laughed at for the extravagance to which he carries it. The Christian is not for giving up the social virtues; but the open enemy and the cold friend of the gospel are for giving up piety; and while they garnish all that is right and amiable in humanity, with the unsubstantial praises of their eloquence, they pour contempt upon that very principle which forms our best security for the existence of virtue in the world. We say nothing that can degrade the social virtues in the estimation of men; but by making them part of religion, we exalt them above all that poet or moralist can do for them. We give them God for their object, and for their end the grandeur of eternity. No! it is not the Christian who is the enemy of social virtue; it is he who sighs in all the ecstacy of sentiment over it, at the very

time that he is digging away its foundation, and wreaking on that piety which is its principle, the cruelty of his scorn.

It is very well in its place to urge the civilizing influence of a Missionary Society. But this is not the main object of such an institution. It is not the end. It is only the accompaniment. It is a never-failing collateral, and may be used as a lawful instrument in fighting the battles of the Missionary cause. It is right enough to contest it with our enemies at every one point of advantage; and for this purpose to descend, if necessary, to the very ground on which they have posted themselves. But, when so engaged, let us never forget the main elements of our business; for there is a danger, that when turning the eye of our antagonist to the lovely picture of peace, and industry, and cultivation, raised by many a Christian Missionary, among the wilds of heathenism, we turn it away from the very marrow and substance of our undertaking; the great aim of which is to preach Christ to sinners, and to rear human souls to a beauteous and never fading immortality.

The wish of our pious and patriotic king, that every man in his dominions might be able to read the Bible, has circulated through the land. It has been commented upon with eloquence; and we doubt not, that something like the glow of a virtuous sensibility has been awakened by it. But let us never forget that in the breasts of many, all this may be little better than a mere theatrical emotion. Give me the man who is in the daily habit of opening his Bible, who willingly puts himself into the attitude of a little child when he reads it, and casts an un-

shrinking eye over its information and its testimony. This is the way of giving effect and consistency to their boasted admiration of the royal sentiment. The mere admiration in itself indicates nothing. It may be as little connected with the sturdiness of principle as the finery of any poetical delusion. O! it is easy to combine a vague and general testimony to the Bible, with a disgusted feeling of antipathy to the methodism of its actual contents; and thousands can profess to make it their rallying point, who pour contempt upon its doctrines, and give the lie to the faithfulness of its sayings.

Let us put you to the trial. The Bible tells us, that "he who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It calls upon us "to preach the gospel to every creature," that every creature may believe it; for he who so "believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Such is the mighty difference between believing and not believing. It makes all the difference between hell and heaven. He who believeth, hath passed from death even unto life; and the errand of the Missionary is to carry these overtures to the men of all languages, and all countries; that he may prevail upon them to make this transition. Some reject his overtures, and to them the gospel is the savour of death unto death. Others embrace them, and to them the gospel is the savour of life unto life. Whatever be his reception, he counts it his duty and his business to preach the gospel; and if he get some to hear, and others to forbear, he just fares as the Apostles did before him. Now, my brethren, have we got among the substantial realities of the Mis-

sionary cause. We have carried you forward from the accessaries to the radical elements of the business; and if you, offended at the hardness of these sayings, feel as if now we had got within the confines of methodism; then know that this feeling arose in your minds at the very moment that we got within the four corners of the Bible; and your fancied admiration of this book, however exquisitely felt or eloquently uttered, is nothing better than the wretched flummery of a sickly and deceitful imagination.

Our venerable Society has given the sanction of her example to the best and the dearest objects of Missionaries. Like others she has kept a wakeful eye over all that could contribute to the interests of the species. She has given encouragement to art and to industry, but she has never been diverted from the religion of the people as the chief aim of all her undertakings. To this end she has multiplied schools, and made the reading of the Scriptures the main acquirement of her scholars. The Bible is her school-book, and it is to her that the Highlands of Scotland owe the translation of the sacred record into their own tongue. She sends preachers as well as teachers among them. As she has made the reading of the word a practicable acquirement, so she has made the hearing of the word an accessible privilege. In short, she has set up what may be called a christian apparatus in many districts, which the Legislature of the country had left unprovided for. She is filling up the blanks which, among the scattered and extended parishes of the North, occur so frequently over the broad surface of a thinly peopled country. She has come in contact with these remoter

groups and hamlets, which the influence of the Establishment did not reach. And she has multiplied her endowments at such a rate, that very many people have got christian instruction in its different branches as nearly, and as effectively to bear upon them, as in the more favoured districts of the land.

When a wealthy native of a Highland parish, penetrated with a feeling of the wants of his neighbours, erects a chapel, or endows a seminary among them, his benevolence is felt and acknowledged by all; and I am not aware of a single association which can disturb our moral estimate of such a proceeding, or restrain the fullness of that testimony which is due to it. But should an individual, at a distance from the parish in question, do the same thing; should he, with no natural claim upon him, and without the stimulus of any of those affections, which the mere circumstance of vicinity is fitted to inspire; should he, I say, merely upon a moving representation of their necessities, devote his wealth to the same cause; what influence ought this to have upon our estimate of his character? Why, in all fairness, it should just lead us to infer a stronger degree of the principle of philanthropy, a principle which in his case was unaided by any local influence whatever, and which urged him to exertion, and to sacrifice, in the face of an obstacle which the other had not to contend with—the obstacle of distance. Now what one individual may be conceived to do for one parish, a number of individuals may do for a number of parishes. They may form into a society, and combine their energies and their means for the benefit of the whole country, and should that country lie at a

distance, the only way in which it affects our estimate of their exertions, is by leading us to see in them a stronger principle of attachment to the species, and a more determined zeal for the object of their benevolence, in spite of the additional difficulties with which it is encumbered.

Now the principle does not stop here. In the instance before us, it has been carried from the metropolis of Scotland to the distance of her northern extremities. But tell me, why it might not be carried round the globe. This very Society has carried it over the Atlantic, and the very apparatus which she has planted in the Highlands and islands of our country, she has set a going more than once in the wilds of America. The very discipline which she has applied to her own population, she has brought to bear on human beings in other quarters of the world. She has wrought with the same instruments upon the same materials, and as in sound philosophy it ought to have been expected, she has obtained the same result—a christian people rejoicing in the faith of Jesus, and ripening for heaven, by a daily progress upon earth, in the graces and accomplishments of the gospel. I have yet to learn what that is which should make the same teaching, and the same Bible, applicable to one part of the species, and not applicable to another. I am not aware of a single principle in the philosophy of man which points to such a distinction; nor do I know a single category in the science of human nature, which can assist me in drawing the landmark between those to whom Christianity may be given, and those who are unworthy or unfit for the participation of its blessings.

I have been among illiterate peasantry, and I have marked how apt they were, in their narrow field of observation, to cherish a kind of malignant contempt for the men of another shire, or another country. I have heard of barbarians, and of their insolent disdain for foreigners. I have read of Jews, and of their unsocial and excluding prejudices. But I always looked upon these as the jealousies of ignorance, which science and observation had the effect of doing away, and that the accomplished traveller, liberalized by frequent intercourse with the men of other countries, saw through the vanity of all these prejudices, and disowned them. What the man of liberal philosophy is in sentiment, the Missionary is in practice. He sees in every man a partaker of his own nature, and a brother of his own species. He contemplates the human mind in the generality of its great elements. He enters upon the wide field of benevolence, and disdains those geographical barriers, by which little men would shut out one half of the species from the kind offices of the other. His business is with man, and let his localities be what they may, enough for his large and noble heart, that he is bone of the same bone. To get at him, he will shun no danger, he will shrink from no privation, he will spare himself no fatigue, he will brave every element of heaven, he will hazard the extremities of every clime, he will cross seas, and work his persevering way through the briars and thickets of the wilderness. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the heathen, in weariness and painfulness, he seeks after him. The cast and the colour are nothing to the comprehensive eye of a Missionary.

His is the broad principle of good will to the children of men. His doings are with the species, and overlooking all the accidents of climate, or of country, enough for him, if the individual he is in quest of be a man—a brother of the same nature—with a body which a few years will bring to the grave, and a spirit that returns to the God who gave it.

But this man of large and liberal principles is a missionary; and this is enough to put to flight all admiration of him, and of his doings. I forbear to expatiate; but sure I am that certain philosophers of the day, and certain fanatics of the day, should be made to change places; if those only are the genuine philosophers who keep to principles in spite of names, and those only the genuine fanatics who are ruled by names instead of principles.

The Society for propagating Christian knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, has every claim upon a religious public; and I trust that those claims will not be forgotten among the multiplicity of laudable and important objects, which are now afloat in this age of benevolent enterprise. She has all the experience and respectability and tried usefulness of age; may she have none of the infirmities of age. May she have nothing either of the rust or the indolence of an establishment about her. Resting on the consciousness of her own righteous, and strongly supported cause; may she look on the operations of other societies with complacency, and be jealous of none of them. She confers with them upon their common objects; she assists them with her experience, and when struggling with difficulties, they make their appeal to the generosity of the christian

world, she nobly leads the way, and im rts to m with liberal hand, out of her own reven . She l conferred lasting obligations upon th Missio cause. She spreads over it the shelter of her venerable name, and by the answer of "come and see," to those who ask if any good thing can come out of it, she gives a practical refutation to the reasonings of all its adversaries. She redeems the best of causes from the unmerited contempt under which it labours, and she will be repaid. The religious public will not be backward to own the obligation. We are aware of the prevalence of the Missionary Spirit, and of the many useful directions in which it is n operating. But we are not afraid of the public l ing carried away from us. We know that there is room for all, that there are funds for all; and our policy is not to repress, but to excite the Missiona spirit, and then there will be a heart for all.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

THE TRON CHURCH, GLASGOW,

ON

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 19, 1817,

THE DAY OF THE

FUNERAL OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.

BY

REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.
Minister of the Tron Church,
GLASGOW.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Sermon is the fruit of a very hurried and unlooked for exertion—and never was there any publication brought forward under circumstances of greater reluctancy, and with a more honest feeling of unpreparedness, on the part of the author. The truth is, that he was at a great distance from home, when the urgency of the public demand for his personal appearance on the nineteenth of November, reached him, and that so late, that he had no other resource than to write for the pulpit during the intervals, and after the exhaustion of a very rapid and fatiguing journey. It is true that he might revise. But to revise such a composition, would be to re-make it; and he has chosen rather to bring it forward, and that as nearly as possible, in the literal terms of its delivery.

But it may be asked, if so unfit for the public eye, why make it public? It may be thought by many, that the avowal is not a wise one. But wisdom ought never to be held in reverence separately from truth; and it would be disguising the real motive, were it concealed, that a very perverse misconception which has gone abroad respecting one passage of the Sermon, and which has found its way into many of the newspapers, is the real and impelling cause of the step that has been taken; and that, had it not been for the spread of such a misconception, there never would have been obtruded on the public, a performance written on a call of urgent necessity, and most assuredly without the slightest anticipation of authorship.

But, it may be said, does not such a measure as this bring the pulpit into a state of the most degrading subordination

to the diurnal press, since there is not a single sermon which cannot be so reported, as, without the literality of direct falsehood, to convey through the whole country, all the injuries of a substantial misrepresentation; and if a minister should condescend publicly to notice every such random and ephemeral statement, he might thereby incessantly involve himself in the most helpless and harrassing of all controversy?

Now, in opposition to this, let it be observed, that a person placed in this difficult and disagreeable predicament, may advert for once to such a provocation, and that for the express purpose, that he may never have to do it again. He may count it enough to make one decisive exposure of the injustice which can be done in this way to a public instructor, and then hold himself acquitted of every similar attempt in all time coming. He thereby raises a sort of abiding or monumental antidote, which may serve to neutralize the mischief of any future attack, or future insinuation. By this one act, though he may not silence the obloquies of the daily press, he has at least purchased for himself the privilege of standing unmoved by all the mistakes, or by all the malignities which may proceed from it.

Yet, it is no more than justice to a numerous and very important class of writers, to state it as our conviction of the great majority of them, that they feel the dignity and responsibility of their office, and hold it to be the highest point of professional honour, ever to maintain the most gentlemanly avoidance of all that is calculated to wound the feelings of an unoffending individual.

There is one temptation, however, to which the editors of this department of literature are peculiarly liable, which may be briefly adverted to, and the influence of which, may be observed to extend even to a higher class of journalists. There is an eagerness to transmute every thing into metal of their own peculiar currency—there is an extreme avidi-

ty to lay hold of every utterance, and to send it abroad, tinged with the colouring of their own party—there is a ravenous desire of approbation extending itself to every possible occurrence, and to every one individual whom they would like to enlist under the banners of their own partisanship, which, for their own credit, they would be more careful to repress, did they perceive with sufficient force, and sufficient distinctness, that it makes them look more like desperadoes of a sinking cause, than the liberal and honest expounders of public politics and literature, which claim so respectable a portion of the intelligence of the country.

The writer of this Sermon has only to add, that he does not know how a sorer imputation could have been devised against the heart and the principles of a clergyman, than that, on the tender and hallowed day of a nation's repose from all the sordidness and all the irritations of party, he should have made the pulpit a vehicle of invective against any administration; or that, after mingling his tears with those of his people, over the untimely death of one so dear to us, he should have found room for any thing else than those lessons of general Christianity, by which an unsparing reproof is ministered to impiety, in whatever quarter it may be found—even that impiety which wears the very same features, and offers itself in the very same aspect, under all administrations.

SERMON.

ISAIAH xxvi. 9.

"For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

I AM sorry that I shall not be able to extend the application of this text beyond its more direct and immediate bearing on that event on which we are now met to mingle our regrets, and our sensibilities, and our prayers—that, occupied as we all are with the mournful circumstance that has bereft our country of one of its brightest anticipations, I shall not be able to clear my way to the accomplishment of what is, strictly speaking, the congregational object of an address from the pulpit, which ought, in every possible case, to be an address to the conscience—that, therefore, instead of the concerns of personal Christianity, which, under my present text, I might, if I had space for it, press home upon the attention of my hearers, I shall be under the necessity of restricting myself to that more partial application of the text which relates to the matters of public Christianity. It is upon this account, as well as upon others, that I rejoice in the present appointment, for the improvement of that sad and sudden visitation which has so desolated the hearts and the hopes of a whole people. I therefore feel more freedom in

coming forward with such remarks as, to the eyes of many, may wear a more public and even political complexion, than is altogether suited to the ministrations of the Sabbath. And yet I cannot but advert, and that in such terms of reproof as I think to be most truly applicable, to another set of men, whose taste for preaching is very much confined to these great and national occasions—who, habitually absent from church on the Sabbath, are yet observed, and that most prominently, to come together in eager and clustering attendance, on some interesting case of pathos or of politics—who in this way obtrude upon the general notice, their loyalty to an earthly sovereign, while, in reference to their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, they scandalize all that is Christian in the general feeling, by their manifest contempt for him and for his ordinances—who look for the ready compliance of ministers, in all that can gratify their inclinations for pageantry, while for the real effective and only important business of ministers, they have just as little reverence as if it were all a matter of hollow and insignificant parade. It is right to share in the triumphs of successful, and to shed the tears of afflicted, patriotism. But it is also right to estimate according to its true character, the patriotism of those who are never known to offer one homage to Christianity, except when it is associated with the affairs of state, or with the wishes, and the commands and the expectations of statesmen.

But the frivolous and altogether despicable taste of the men to whom I am alluding, must be entirely separated from such an occasion as the present. For, in truth, there never was an occasion of such

magnitude, and at the same time of such peculiarity. There never was an occasion on which a matter of deep political interest was so blended and mixed up with matter of very deep and affecting tenderness. It does not wear the aspect of an affair of politics at all, but of an affair of the heart; and the novel exhibition is now offered, of all party-irritations merging into one common and overwhelming sensibility. Oh! how it tends to quiet the agitations of every earthly interest and earthly passion when Death steps forward and demonstrates the littleness of them all—when he stamps a character of such affecting insignificance on all that we are contending for—when, as if to make known the greatness of his power in the sight of a whole country, he stalks in ghastly triumph over the might and the grandeur of its most august family, and singling out that member of it on whom the dearest hopes and the gayest visions of the people were suspended, he, by one fatal and resistless blow, sends abroad the fame of his victory and his strength, throughout the wide extent of an afflicted nation. He has indeed put a cruel and impressive mockery on all the glories of mortality. A few days ago, all looked so full of life, and promise, and security—when we read of the bustle of the great preparation—and were told of the skill and the talent that were pressed into the service—and heard of the goodly attendance of the most eminent in the nation—and how officers of state, and the titled dignitaries of the land, were charioted in splendour to the scene of expectation, as to the joys of an approaching holiday—yes, and we were told too, that the bells of the surrounding villages

were all in readiness for the merry peal of gratulation, and that the expectant metropolis of our empire, on tiptoe for the announcement of her future monarch, had her winged couriers of despatch to speed the welcome message to the ears of her citizens, and that from her an embassy of gladness was to travel over all the provinces of the land; and the country, forgetful of all that she had suffered, was at length to offer the spectacle of one wide and rejoicing jubilee. O Death! thou hast indeed chosen the time and the victim, for demonstrating the grim ascendancy of thy power over all the hopes and fortunes of our species!—Our blooming Princess, whom fancy had decked with the coronet of these realms, and under whose gentle sway all bade so fair for the good and the peace of our nation, has he placed upon her bier! And, as if to fill up the measure of his triumph, has he laid by her side, that babe, who, but for him, might have been the monarch of a future generation; and he has done that, which by no single achievement he could otherwise have accomplished—he has sent forth over the whole of our land, the gloom of such a bereavement as cannot be replaced by any living descendant of royalty—he has broken the direct succession of the monarchy of England—by one and the same disaster, has he wakened up the public anxieties of the country, and sent a pang as acute as that of the most woful domestic visitation, into the heart of each of its families.

In the prosecution of the following discourse, as I have already stated, I shall satisfy myself with a very limited application of the text. I shall in the first place, offer a few remarks on that branch of the

righteousness of practical Christianity, which consists in the duty that subjects owe to their governors. And in the second place, I shall attempt to improve the present great national disaster, to the object of impressing upon you, that, under all our difficulties and all our fears, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate the nation; and that therefore, if this great interest be neglected, the country, instead of reaping improvement from the judgments of God, is in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

I. But here let me attempt the difficult task of rightly dividing the Word of Truth—and premise this head of discourse, by admitting that I know nothing more hateful than the crouching spirit of servility. I know not a single class of men more unworthy of reverence, than the base and interested minions of a court. I know not a set of pretenders who more amply deserve to be held out to the chastisement of public scorn, than they who, under the guise of public principle, are only aiming at personal aggrandizement. This is one corruption. But let us not forget that there is another—even a spurious patriotism which would proscribe loyalty as one of the virtues altogether. Now, I cannot open my Bible, without learning that loyalty is one branch of the righteousness of practical Christianity.—I am not seeking to please men, but God, when I repeat his words in your hearing—that you should honour the King—that you should obey Magistrates—that you should meddle not with those who are given to change—that you should be subject to principalities and powers—that you should lead a quiet and a

peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This, then, is a part of the righteousness which it is our business to teach, and sure I am that it is a part of righteousness which the judgment now dealt out to us, should, of all others, dispose you to learn. I know not a virtue more in harmony with the present feelings, and afflictions, and circumstances of the country, than that of a steadfast and determined loyalty. The time has been, when such an event as the one that we are now assembled to deplore, would have put every restless spirit into motion, and set a guilty ambition upon its murderous devices, and brought powerful pretenders with their opposing hosts of vassalage into the field, and enlisted towns and families under the rival banners of a most destructive fray of contention, and thus have broken up the whole peace and confidence of society. Let us bless God that these days of barbarism are now gone by. But the vessel of the state is still exposed to many agitations. The sea of politics is a sea of storms, on which the gale of human passions would make her founder, were it not for the guidance of human principle; and, therefore, the truest policy of a nation is to Christianize her subjects, and to disseminate among them the influence of religion. The most skilful arrangement for rightly governing a state, is to scatter among the governed, not the terrors of power—not the threats of jealous and alarmed authority—not the demonstrations of sure and ready vengeance held forth by the rigour of an offended law. These may, at times, be imperiously called for. But a permanent security against the wild outbreakings of turbulence and disaster, is only

to be attained by diffusing the lessons of the Gospel throughout the great mass of our population—even those lessons which are utterly and diametrically at antipodes with all that is criminal and wrong in the spirit of political disaffection. The only radical counteraction to this evil is to be found in the spirit of Christianity; and though animated by such a spirit, a man may put on the intrepidity of one of the old prophets, and denounce even in the ear of royalty the profligacies which may disgrace or deform it—though animated by such a spirit, he may lift his protesting voice in the face of an unchristian magistracy, and tell them of their errors—though animated by such a spirit, he, to avoid every appearance of evil, will neither stoop to the flattery of power, nor to the solicitations of patronage—and though all this may bear, to the superficial eye, a hard, and repulsive, and hostile aspect towards the established dignities of the land—yet forget not, that if a real and honest principle of Christianity lie at the root of this spirit, there exists within the bosom of such a man, a foundation of principle, on which all the lessons of Christianity will rise into visible and consistent exemplification. And it is he, and such as he, who will turn out to be the salvation of the country, when the hour of her threatened danger is approaching—and it is just in proportion as you spread and multiply such a character that you raise within the bosom of the nation, the best security against all her fluctuations—and, as in every other department of human concerns, so will it be found, that, in this particular department, Christians are the salt of the earth, and Christianity the most copious and ema-

nating fountain of all the guardian virtues of peace, and order, and patriotism.

The judgment under which we now labour, supplies, I think, one touching, and, to every good and christian mind, one powerful argument of loyalty. It is the distance of the prince from his people which feeds the political jealousy of the latter, and which by removing the former to a height of inaccessible grandeur, places him, as it were, beyond the reach of their sympathies. Much of that political rancour, which festers, and agitates, and makes such a tremendous appearance of noise and of hostility in our land, is due to the aggravating power of distance. If two of the deadliest political antagonists in our country, who abuse, and vilify, and pour forth their stormy eloquence on each other, whether in parliament or from the press, were actually to come into such personal and familiar contact, as would infuse into their controversy the sweetening of mere acquaintanceship, this very circumstance would disarm and do away almost all their violence. The truth is, that when one man rails against another across the table of a legislative assembly, or when he works up his fermenting imagination, and pens his virulent sentences against another, in the retirement of a closet—he is fighting against a man at a distance—he is exhausting his strength against an enemy whom he does not know—he is swelling into indignation, and into all the movements of what he thinks right and generous principle, against a chimera of his own apprehension; and a similar reaction comes back upon him from the quarter that he has assailed, and thus the controversy thickens, and

the delusion every day gets more impenetrable, and the distance is ever widening, and the breach is always becoming more hopeless and more irreparable; and all this between two men, who, if they had been in such accidental circumstances of juxtaposition as could have let them a little more into one another's feelings, and to one another's sympathies, would at least have had all the asperities of their difference smoothed away by the mere softenings and kindlinesses of ordinary human intercourse.

Now let me apply this remark to the mutual state of sentiment which obtains between the different orders of the community. Among the rich, there is apt at times to rankle an injurious and unworthy impression of the poor—and just because these poor stand at a distance from them—just because they come not into contact with that which would draw them out into courteousness to their persons, and in benevolent attentions to their families. Among the poor, on the other hand, there is often a disdainful suspicion of the wealthy, as if they were actuated by a proud indifference to them and to their concerns, and, as if they were placed away from them at so distant and lofty an elevation as not to require the exercise of any of those cordialities, which are ever sure to spring in the bosom of man to man, when they come to know each other, and to have the actual sight of each other. But, let any accident place an individual of the higher before the eyes of the lower order, on the ground of their common humanity—let the latter be made to see that the former are akin to themselves in all the sufferings and in all the sensibilities of our common inheritance

—let, for example, the greatest chieftain of the territory die, and the report of his weeping children, or of his distracted widow, be sent through the neighbourhood—or, let an infant of his family be in suffering, and the mothers of the humble vicinity be run to for counsel and assistance—or, in any other way, let the rich, instead of being viewed by their inferiors through the dim and distant medium of that fancied interval which separates the ranks of society, be seen as heirs of the same frailty, and as dependent on the same sympathies with themselves—and, at that moment, all the floodgates of honest sympathy will be opened—and the lowest servants of the establishment will join in the cry of distress which has come upon their family—and the neighbouring cottagers, to share in their grief, have only to recognise them as the partakers of one nature, and to perceive an assimilation of feelings and of circumstances between them.

Let me further apply all this to the sons and the daughters of royalty. The truth is, that they appear to the public eye as stalking on a platform so highly elevated above the general level of society, that it removes them, as it were, from all the ordinary sympathies of our nature. And though we read at times of their galas, and their birth-days, and their drawing-rooms, there is nothing in all this to attach us to their interests and their feelings, as the inhabitants of a familiar home—as the members of an affectionate family. Surrounded as they are with the glare of a splendid notoriety, we scarcely recognize them as men and as women, who can rejoice, and weep, and pine with disease, and taste the sufferings of

mortality, and be oppressed with anguish, and love with tenderness, and experience in their bosoms the same movements of grief or of affection that we do ourselves. And thus it is, that they labour under a real and heavy disadvantage. There is not, in their case, the counteraction of that kindly influence, to alleviate the weight or the malignity of prejudice, which men of a humbler station are ever sure to enjoy. In the case of a man whose name is hardly known beyond the limits of his personal acquaintance, the tale of calumny that is raised against him extends not far beyond these limits; and, therefore, wherever it is heard, it meets with a something to blunt and to soften it, in those very cordialities which the familiar exhibition of him as a brother of our common nature is fitted to awaken. But it is not so with those in the elevated walks of society. Their names are familiar where their persons are unknown; and whatever malignity may attach to the one, circulates abroad, and is spread far beyond the limits of their possible intercourse with human beings, and meets with no kindly counteraction from our acquaintance with the other. And this may explain how it is, that the same exalted personage may, at one and the same time, be suffering under a load of most unmerited obloquy from the wide and the general public, and be to all his familiar domestics an object of the most enthusiastic devotedness and regard.

Now, if through an accidental opening, the public should be favoured with a domestic exhibition—if, by some overpowering visitation of Providence upon an illustrious family, the members of it should come to be recognised as the partakers of one common hu-

manity with ourselves—if, instead of beholding them in their gorgeousness as princes, we look to them in their natural evolution of their sensibilities as men—if the stately palace should be turned into a house of mourning—in one word, if death should do what he has already done, he has met the Princess of England in the prime and promise of her days, and as she was moving onward on her march to a hereditary throne, he has laid her at his feet. Ah! my brethren, when the imagination dwells on that bed where the remains of departed youth and departed infancy are lying—when, instead of crowns and canopies of grandeur, it looks to the forlorn husband, and the weeping father, and the human feelings which agitate their bosoms, and the human tears which flow down their cheeks, and all such symptoms of deep affliction as bespeaks the workings of suffering and dejected nature—what ought to be, and what actually is, the feeling of the country at so sad an exhibition? It is just the feeling of the domestics and the labourers at Claremont. All is soft and tender as womanhood. Nor is there a peasant in our land, who is not touched to the very heart when he thinks of the unhappy Stranger who is now spending his days in grief and his nights in sleeplessness—as he mourns alone in his darkened chamber, and refuses to be comforted—as he turns in vain for rest to his troubled feelings, and cannot find it—as he gazes on the memorials of an affection that blessed the brightest, happiest, shortest year of his existence—as he looks back on the endearments of the bygone months, and the thought that they have forever fleeted away from him, turns all to agony—as he looks forward on the blighted prospect

of this world's pilgrimage, and feels that all which bound him to existence, is now torn irretrievably away from him! There is not a British heart that does not feel to this interesting visitor, all the force and all the tenderness of a most affecting relationship; and go, where he may, will he ever be recognised and cherished as a much loved member of the British family.

It is in this way that through the avenue of a nation's tenderness, we can estimate the strength and the steadfastness of a nation's loyalty. On minor questions of the constitution, we may storm, and rave, and look at each other a little ferociously—and it was by some such appearance as this, that he, who, in the days of his strength, was the foulest and most formidable of all our enemies, said of the country in which we live, that, torn by factions, it was going rapidly to dissolution. Yet these are but the skirmishings of a pettier warfare—the movements of nature and of passion, in a land of freemen—the harmless contests of men pulling in opposite ways at some of the smaller ropes in the tackling of our great national vessel. But look to these men, in the time of need and the hour of suffering—look to them now. when in one great and calamitous visitation, the feeling of every animosity is overborne—look to them now, when the darkness is gathering, and the boding cloud of disaster hangs over us, and some chilling fear of insecurity is beginning to circulate in whispers through the land—look to them now, when in the entombment of this sad and melancholy day, the hopes of more than half a century are to be interred—look to them now. when from one end of

the country to the other, there is the mourning of a very great and sore lamentation, so that all who pass by, may say, this is a grievous mourning to the people of the land. Oh! is it possible that these can be other than honest tears, or that tears of pity can on such an emergency as the present, be other than tears of patriotism. Who does not see this principle sitting in visible expression on the general countenance of the nation—that the people are sound at heart, and that with this, as the mainsheet of our dependence, we may still, under the blessing of God, weather and surmount all the difficulties which threaten us.

II. I now proceed to the second head of discourse, under which I was to attempt such an improvement of this great national disaster, as might enforce the lesson, that under every fear and every difficulty, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate a nation; and that, therefore, if this great interest be neglected, instead of learning any thing from the judgments of God, we are in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

Under my first head I restricted myself exclusively to the virtue of loyalty, which is one of the special, but I most willingly admit, nay and most earnestly contend, is also one of the essential attributes of righteousness. But there is a point on which I profess myself to be altogether at issue with a set of men, who composed, at one time, whatever they do now, a very numerous class of society. I mean those men, who, with all the ostentation, and all the intolerance of loyalty, evinced an utter indifference either

to their own personal religion or to the religion of the people who were around them—who were satisfied with the single object of keeping the neighbourhood in a state of political tranquillity—who, if they could only get the population to be quiet, cared not for the extent of profaneness or of profligacy that was among them—and who, while they thought to signalize themselves in the favour of their earthly king, by keeping down every turbulent or rebellious movement among his subjects, did in fact, by their own conspicuous example, lead them and cheer them on in their rebellion against the king of heaven—and, as far as the mischief could be wrought by the contagion of their personal influence, these men of loyalty did what in them lay, to spread a practical contempt for Christianity, and for all its ordinances, throughout the land.

Now, I would have such men to understand, if any such there be within the sphere of my voice, that it is not with their loyalty that I am quarrelling. I am only telling them, that this single attribute of righteousness will never obtain a steady footing in the hearts of the people, except on the ground of a general principle of righteousness. I am telling them how egregiously they are out of their own politics, in ever thinking that they can prop the virtue of loyalty in a nation, while they are busily employed, by the whole instrumentality of their example and of their doings, in sapping the very foundation upon which it is reared. I am telling them, that if they wish to see loyalty in perfection, and such loyalty, too, as requires not any scowling vigilance of theirs to uphold it, they must look to the

most moral, and orderly, and christianized districts of the country. I am merely teaching them a lesson of which they seem to be ignorant, that if you loosen the hold of Christianity over the hearts of the population, you pull down from their ascendency all the virtues of Christianity, of which loyalty is one. Yes, and I will come yet a little closer, and take a look of that loyalty which exists in the shape of an isolated principle in their own bosoms. I should like to gauge the dimensions of this loyalty of theirs, in its state of disjunction from the general principle of Christianity. I wish to know the kind of loyalty which characterizes the pretenders to whom I am alluding —the men who have no value for preaching, but as it stands associated with the pageantry of state—the men who would reckon it the most grievous of all heresies, to be away from church on some yearly day of the king's appointment, but are seldom within its walls on the weekly day of God's appointment—the men who, if ministers were away from their post of loyalty, on an occasion like the present, would, without mercy, and without investigation, denounce them as suspicious characters; but who, when we are at the post of piety, dispensing the more solemn ordinances of Christianity, openly lead the way in that crowded and eager emigration, which carries half the rank and opulence of the town away from us. What, oh! what is the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth of this vapouring, swaggering, high-sounding loyalty!—It is nothing better than the loyalty of political subalterns, in the low game of partizanship, or of whippers-in to an existing administration—it is not the loyalty which will

avail us in the day of danger—it is not to them that we need to look, in the evil hour of a country's visitation;—but to those right-hearted, sound-thinking christian men, who, without one interest to serve, or one hope to forward, honour their king, because they fear their God.

Let me assure such a man, if such a man there is within the limits of this assembly—that, keen as his scent may be after political heresies, the deadliest of all such heresies lies at his own door—that there is not to be found, within the city of our habitation, a rottener member of the community than himself—that, withering as he does by his example the principle which lies at the root of all national prosperity, it is he, and such as he, who stands opposed to the best and the dearest objects of loyalty—and if ever that shall happen, which it is my most delightful confidence that God will avert from us and from our children's children to the latest posterity—if ever the wild frenzy of revolution shall run through the ranks of Britain's population, these are the men who will be the most deeply responsible for all its atrocities and for all its horrors.*

* I cannot but advert here to a delicate impediment which lies in the way of the faithful exercise of the ministerial functions, from the existence of two great political parties, which would monopolize between them, all the sentiments and all the services of the country. Is it not a very possible thing that the line of demarcation between these parties, may not coalesce, throughout all its extent, with the sacred and immutable line of distinction between right and wrong?—and ought not this latter line to stand out so clearly and so prominently to the eye of the christian minister, that in the act of dealing around him the reproofs and the lessons of Christianity, the former line should be away from his contemplation altogether? But it is thus that, with the most scrupulous avoidance both of the one and of the other species of partisanship, he may in the direct and conscientious

ving thus briefly adverted to one of the causes of impiety and consequent disloyalty, I shall proceed to offer a few remarks on the great object of teaching the people righteousness, not so much in a general

discharge of the duties of his office, deliver himself in such a way as to give a kind of general and corporate offence to one political denomination; and, what is still more grievous, as to be appropriated by the men of another denomination, with whom in their capacity as politicians he desires no fellowship whatever, and whose applauses of him in this capacity are in every way most odious and insufferable.

It appears to us, that a christian minister cannot keep himself in the true path of consistency at all, without refusing to each of the parties, all right of appropriation. Their line of demarcation is not his line. Their objects are not his objects. He asks no patronage from the one—he asks no favour from the other, except that they shall not claim kindred with him. He may suffer, at times, from the intolerance of the unworthy underlings of the former party; but never will his sensations of distaste, for the whole business of party politics, become so intense and so painful, as when the hosannas of the latter party threaten to rise around him.

We often hear from each, and more particularly from one of these parties, of the virtue and the dignity of independence. The only way it appears to us in which a man can sustain the true and complete character of independence, is to be independent of both. He who cares for neither of them, is the only independent man; and to him only belongs the privilege of crossing and re-crossing their factitious line of demarcation, just as he feels himself impelled by the high paramount and subordinating principles of the Christianity which he professes. In the exercise of this privilege, I here take the opportunity of saying, that if the chastisement of public scorn should fall on those who, under the disguise of public principle, have *found* a personal aggrandizement for themselves, it should fall with equal severity on those who, under the same disguise, are *seeking* for precisely the same object—that if there be some men in the country who care not for the extent of profaneness and profligacy that is among the people, provided they can only keep them *quiet*, there are also some men who care not for their profaneness or their profligacy, provided they can only keep them *unquiet*—who bear no other regard to the people than merely as an instrument of annoyance against an existing administration—who can shed their serpent tears over their distresses, and yet be inwardly grieved, should either a favorable season or reviving trade disappoint their boding speculation—who, in the face of undeniable common sense, can ascribe to political causes, such calamities as are altogether due to what

and didactic manner, as in the way of brief, and, if possible, of memorable illustration—gathering my argument from the present event, and availing myself, at the same time, of such principles as have

is essential and uncontrollable in the circumstances of the country—and who, if on the strength of misrepresentation and artifice they could only succeed in effecting the great object of their own instalment into office, and the dispossession of their antagonists, would prove themselves, then, to be as indifferent to the comfort, as they show themselves now to be utterly indifferent to the religion and the virtue of the country's population.

But turning away from the beggarly elements of such a competition as this, let us remark, that on the one hand, a religious administration will never take offence at a minister who renders a pertinent reproof to any set of men, even though they should happen to be their own agents or their own underlings; and that, on the other hand, a minister who is actuated by the true spirit of his office, will never so pervert or so prostitute his functions, as to descend to the humble arena of partisanship. He is the faithful steward of such things as are profitable for reproof, and for doctrine, and for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. His single object with the men who are within reach of his hearing, is, that they should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. In the fulfilment of this object, he is not the servant of any administration—though he certainly renders such a service to the state as will facilitate the work of governing to all administrations—as will bring a mighty train of civil and temporal blessings along with it—and in particular, as will diffuse over the whole sphere of his influence, a loyalty as stedfast as the friends of order, and as free from every taint of political servility, as the most genuine friends of freedom can desire.

There is only one case in which it is conceived that the partisanship of a christian minister is at all justifiable. Should the government of our country ever fall into the hands of an infidel or demi-infidel administration—should the men at the helm of affairs be the patrons of all that is unchristian in the sentiment and literature of the country—should they offer a violence to its religious establishments, and thus attempt what we honestly believe would reach a blow to the piety and the character of our population—then, I trust that the language of partisanship will resound from many of the pulpits of the land—and that it will be turned in one stream of pointed invective against such a ministry as this—till, by the force of public opinion, it be swept away as an intolerable nuisance, from the face of our kingdom.

advanced in the course of the preceding observations.

My next remark, then, on this subject, will be taken from a sentiment, of which I think you must all on the present occasion feel the force and the propriety. Would it not have been most desirable could the whole population of the city have been admitted to join in the solemn services of the day? Do you not think that they are precisely such services as would have spread a loyal and patriotic influence among them? Is it not experimentally the case, that, over the untimely grave of our fair Princess, the meanest of the people would have shed as warm and plentiful a tribute of honest sensibility as the most refined and delicate among us? And, I ask, is it not unfortunate, that, on the day of such an affecting, and, if I may so style it, such a national exercise, there should not have been twenty more churches with twenty more ministers, to have contained the whole crowd of eager and interested listeners? A man of mere loyalty, without one other accomplishment, will, I am sure, participate in a regret so natural; but couple this regret with the principle, that the only way in which the loyalty of the people can effectually be maintained, is on the basis of their Christianity, and then the regret in question embraces an object still more general—and well were it for us, if, amid the insecurity of families, and the various fluctuations of fortune and of arrangement that are taking place in the highest walks of society, the country were led, by the judgment with which it has now been visited, to deepen the foundation of all its order and of all its interests, in the moral education

of its people. Then indeed the text would have its literal fulfilment. When the judgments of God are in the earth, the rulers of the world would lead the inhabitants thereof to learn righteousness.

In our own city, much in this respect remains to be accomplished; and I speak of the great mass of our city and suburb population, when I say, that through the week they lie open to every rude and random exposure—and when Sabbath comes, no solemn appeal to the conscience, no stirring recollections of the past, no urgent calls to resolve against the temptations of the future, come along with it. It is undeniable, that within the compass of a few square miles, the daily walk of the vast majority of our people is beset with a thousand contaminations; and whether it be on the way to the market, or on the way to the workshop, or on the way to the crowded manufactory, or on the way to any one resort of industry that you choose to condescend upon, or on the way to the evening home, where the labours of a virtuous day should be closed by the holy thankfulness of a pious and affectionate family; be it in passing from one place to another; or be it amid all the throng of sedentary occupations: there is not one day of the six, and not one hour of one of these days, when frail and unsheltered man is not plied by the many allurements of a world lying in wickedness—when evil communications are not assailing him with their corruptions—when the full tide of example does not bear down upon his purposes, and threaten to sweep all his purity and all his principle away from him. And when the seventh day comes, where, I would ask, are the efficient securities that

ought to be provided against all those inundations of profligacy which rage without control through the week, and spread such a desolating influence a nong the morals of the existing generation?—Oh! tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon —this seventh day, on which it would require a whole army of labourers to give every energy which belongs to them, to the plenteous harvest of so mighty a population, witnesses more than one half of the people precluded from attending the house of God, and wandering every man after the counsel of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes—on this day, the ear of heaven is assailed with a more audacious cry of rebellion than on any other, and the open door of invitation plies with its welcome, the hundreds and the thousands who have found their habitual way to the haunts of depravity. And is there no room, then, to wish for twenty more churches, and twenty more ministers—for men of zeal and of strength, who might go forth among these wanderers, and compel them to come in—for men of holy fervour, who might set the terrors of hell and the free offer of salvation before them—for men of affection, who might visit the sick, the dying, and the afflicted, and cause the irresistible influence of kindness to circulate at large among their families—for men, who, while they fastened their most intense aim on the great object of preparing sinners for eternity, would scatter along the path of their exertions all the blessings of order, and contentment, and sobriety, and at length make it manifest as day, that the righteousness of the people is the only effectual antidote to a country's ruin—the only path to a country's glory?

My next remark shall be founded on a principle to which I have already alluded—the desirableness of a more frequent intercourse between the higher and the lower orders of society; and what more likely to accomplish this, than a larger ecclesiastical accommodation?—not the scanty provision of the present day, by which the poor are excluded from the church altogether, but such a wide and generous system of accommodation, as that the rich and the poor might set in company together in the house of God. It is this christian fellowship, which, more than any other tie, links so intimately together, the high and the low in country parishes. There is, however, another particular to which I would advert, and though I cannot do so without magnifying my office, yet I know not a single circumstance which so upholds the golden line of life among our agricultural population, as the manner in which the gap between the pinnacle of the community and its base is filled up by the week-day duties of the clergyman—by that man, of whom it has been well said, that he belongs to no rank, because he associates with all ranks—by that man, whose presence may dignify the palace, but whose peculiar glory it is to carry the influences of friendship and piety into cottages.

This is the age of moral experiment, and much has been devised in our day for promoting the virtue, and the improvement, and the economical habits of the lower orders of society. But in all these attempts to raise a barrier against the growing profligacy of our towns, one important element seems to have passed unheeded, and to have been altogether omitted in the calculation. In all the comparative estimates

character of a town and the character of a country population, it has been little attended to, that the former are distinguished from the latter by the dreary, hopeless, and almost impassible distance at which they stand from their parish minister. Now, though it be at the hazard of again magnifying my office, I must avow, in the hearing of you all, that there is a moral charm in his personal attentions and his affectionate civilities, and the ever-recurring influence of his visits and his prayers, which, if restored to the people, would impart a new moral aspect, and eradicate much of the licentiousness and the dishonesty that abound in our cities. On this day of national calamity, if ever the subject should be adverted to from the pulpit, we may be allowed to express our riveted convictions on the close alliance that obtains between the political interests and the religious character of a country. And I am surely not out of place, when, on looking at the mighty mass of a city population, I state my apprehension, that if something be not done to bring this enormous physical strength under the control of Christian and humanized principle, the day may yet come, when it may lift against the authorities of the land, its brawny vigour, and discharge upon them all the turbulence of its rude and volcanic energy.

Apart altogether from the essential character of the gospel, and keeping out of view the solemn representations of Christianity, by which we are told that each individual of these countless myriads carries an undying principle in his bosom, and that it is the duty of the minister to cherish it, and to watch over it, as one who must render, at the judgment-

seat, an account of the charge which has been committed to him—apart from this consideration entirely, which I do not now insist upon, though I blush not to avow its paramount importance over all that can be alleged on the inferior ground of political expediency, yet, on that ground alone, I can gather argument enough for the mighty importance of such men, devoted to the labours of their own separate and peculiar employments—giving an unbewildered attention to the office of dealing with the hearts and principles of the thousands who are around them—coming forth from the preparations of an unbroken solitude, armed with all the omnipotence of Truth among their fellow-citizens—and who, rich in the resources of a mind which meditates upon these things and gives itself wholly to them, are able to suit their admonitions to all the varieties of human character, and to draw their copious and persuasive illustrations from every quarter of human experience. But I speak not merely of their Sabbath ministrations. Give to each a manageable extent of town, within the compass of his personal exertions, and where he might be able to cultivate a ministerial influence among all its families—put it into his power to dignify the very humblest of its tenements by the courteousness of his soothing and benevolent attentions—let it be such a district of population as may not bear him down by the multiplicity of its demands; but where, without any feverish or distracting variety of labour, he may be able to familiarize himself to every house, and to know every individual, and to visit every spiritual patient, and to watch every death-bed, and to pour out the sym-

pathies of a pious and affectionate bosom over every mourning and bereaved family. Bring every city of the land under such moral regimen as this, and another generation would not pass away, ere righteousness ran down all their streets like a mighty river. That sullen depravity of character, which the gibbet cannot scare away, and which sits so immoveable in the face of the most menacing severities and in despite of the yearly recurrence of the most terrifying examples,—could not keep its ground against the mild, but restless application of an effective christian ministry. The very worst of men would be constrained to feel the power of such an application. Sunk as they are in ignorance, and inured as they have been from the first years of their neglected boyhood, to scenes of week-day profligacy and Sabbath profanation—these men, of whom it may be said, that all their moralities are extinct, and all their tenderness blunted—even they would feel the power of that reviving touch, which the mingled influence of kindness and piety can often impress on the souls of the most abandoned—even they would open the flood-gates of their hearts, and pour forth the tide of an honest welcome on the men who had come in all the cordiality of good will to themselves and to their families. And thus might a humanizing and an exalting influence be made to circulate through all their dwelling-places: and such a system as this, labouring as it must do at first, under all the discouragements of a heavy and unpromising outset, would gather, during every year of its perseverance, new triumphs and new testimonies to its power. All that is ruthless and

irreclaimable, in the character of the present day, would in time be replaced by the softening virtues of a purer and a better generation. This I know to be the dream of many a philanthropist: and a dream as visionary as the very wildest among the fancies of Utopianism it ever will be, under any other expedient than the one I am now pointing to: and nothing, nothing within the whole compass of nature, or of experience, will ever bring it to its consummation, but the multiplied exertions of the men who carry in their hearts the doctrine, and who bear upon their persons the seal and commission of the New Testament. And, if it be true that towns are the great instruments of political revolution—if it be there that all the elements of disturbance are ever found in busiest fermentation—if we learn, from the history of the past, that they are the favourite and frequented rallying-places for all the brooding violence of the land—who does not see that the pleading earnestness of the christian minister is at one with the soundest maxims of political wisdom, when he urges upon the rulers and magistrates of the land, that this is indeed the cheap defence of a nation—this the vitality of all its strength and of all its greatness.

And it is with the most undissembled satisfaction that I advert to the first step of such a process, within the city of our habitation, as I have now been recommending. It may still be the day of small things; but it is such a day as ought not to be despised. The prospect of another church and another labourer in this interesting field, demands the most respectful acknowledgment of the christian public, to the men who preside over the administration of

our affairs; and they, I am sure, will not feel it to be oppressive, if, met by the willing cordialities of a responding population, the demand should ring in their ears for another, and another, till, like the moving of the spirit on the face of the waters, which made beauty and order to emerge out of the rude materials of creation, the germ of moral renovation shall at length burst into all the efflorescence of moral accomplishment—and the voice of psalms shall again be heard in our families—and impurity and violence shall be banished from our streets—and then the erasure made, in these degenerate days, on the escutcheons of our city, again replaced in characters of gold, shall tell to every stranger, that Glasgow flourisheth through the preaching of the word.*

And though, under the mournful remembrance of our departed Princess, we cannot but feel, on this day of many tears, as if a volley of lightning from heaven had been shot at the pillar of our State, and struck away the loveliest ornament from its pinnacle, and shook the noble fabric to its base; yet still, if we strengthen its foundation in the principle and character of our people, it will stand secure on the deep and steady basis of a country's worth, which can never be overthrown. And thus an enduring memorial of our Princess will be embalmed in the hearts of the people, and good will emerge out of this dark and bitter dispensation, if, when the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.

* The original motto of the City is, "Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of the Word;" which, by the curtailment alluded to, has been reduced to the words, "Let Glasgow flourish."

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY APPLIED TO THE CASE OF RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE AUXILIARY SOCIETY, GLASGOW,

TO THE

HYBERNIAN SOCIETY,

FOR

ESTABLISHING SCHOOLS, AND CIRCULATING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN IRELAND.

BY

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PREFACE.

If the question were put, what is Popery? an answer might be given by the enumeration of what are conceived to be its leading principles. Without at all inquiring whether the conception be a just one or not, there are many persons who would tell us, that the members of this denomination ascribe an infallibility to the Pope; and that they hold the doctrine of transubstantiation; and that they offer religious worship to departed saints, and render an external homage to images; and that they give such an importance to the ceremonial of extreme unction, as to conceive, that by the administration of it, all the guilt of the most worthless and unrenewed character is expiated and done away.—It is enough to mark our aversion to these positions and practices, that we say, that every one of them is unscriptural; and that, if this be a real portraiture of Popery, it is a religion which has no foundation in truth or in the Bible. But it is altogether a different question, in how far Popery, as thus defined, is actually realized by those men who wear the name and the profession of it. Whether this was ever the Popery of a past age, is a question of erudition, into which we propose not to enter. And whether this be the Popery of any people of the present age, is a question of observation, into which we propose not to enter. We confine ourselves to the object of looking into our own hearts, and of looking to those who are immediately around us, with the view of ascertaining whether the contamination and the substantial mischief of these alleged principles might not be detected on a nearer field of observation.

We are all aware that such an attempt as this is not enough to satisfy many Protestants, or to fill up the measure

of their zeal against what they hold to be a most blasphemous and pestilential heresy. They would not merely demand the disavowal of a corrupt system—but they would like to see it attached with all its deformities in the form of a personal charge to the men of a certain prominent and visible denomination. Now, we do not see how the former demand can be more effectually met, than by the denunciation of this system, under whatever shape, or in whatever quarter of society, it may be found—Nor do we conceive how a more honest and decisive seal of reprobation can be set upon it, than by the expression of a dislike so strong and so irreconcileable, as to be felt, even when it obtrudes upon our notice any of its features amongst the individuals of our own connexion, and offers itself to view under the screen of an ostensible Protestantism. As to the latter demand, we frankly confess that we are not historically enough acquainted with the present state of the Catholic mind, to be at all able to comply with it. But should any member of that persuasion come forward with his own explanations, and give such a mitigated view of the peculiarities of Catholics, as to leave the great evangelical doctrines of faith and repentance unimpared by them, and state that an averment of the Bible has never, in his instance, been neutralized or practically stript of its authority, by an averment of Popes or of Councils;—on what principle of candour shall the recognition of a common Christianity be withheld from him? Is it not better to confine our animadversion to the principles of the system, and to let persons alone: and if these persons shall step forward with the affirmation that the system is imaginary, or that, at least, it has no actual residence with them, whether is it the more Christian exhibition on our part, that we exercise, in their behalf, the charity which believeth all things, or that we pertinaciously keep by a charge, the truth of which they solemnly disclaim?

SERMON.

MATTHEW vii. 3, 4, 5.

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?—Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and behold a beam is in thine own eye ?—Thou hypocrite ! first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

THE word beam suggests the idea of a rafter ; and it looks very strange that a thing of such magnitude should be at all conceived to have its seat or fixture in the eye. To remove, by a single sentence, this misapprehension, I shall just say, that the word in the original signifies also a thorn, a something that the eye has room for, but at the same time much larger than a mote, and which must, therefore, have a more powerful effect in deranging the vision, and preventing a man from forming a right estimate of the object he is looking at. Take this along with you, and the three verses will run thus :—Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the thorn that is in thine own eye ? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and behold a thorn is in thine own eye ? Thou hypocrite ! first cast out the thorn out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

In my farther observations on this passage, I shall first introduce what I propose to make the main subject of my discourse, by a very short application of the leading principle of my text, to the case of those judgments that we are so ready to pronounce on each other in private life. And I shall, secondly, proceed to the main subject, viz. that more general kind of judgment which we are apt to pass on the men of a different persuasion, in matters of religion.

I. Every fault of conduct in the outer man, may be run up to some defect of principle in the inner man. It is this defect of principle, which gives the fault all its criminality. It is this alone, which makes it odious in the sight of God. It is upon this that the condemnation of the law rests; and on the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, it will be the share that the heart had in the matter, which will form the great topic of examination, when the deeds done in the body pass under the review of the Son of God. For example, it is a fault to speak evil one of another; but the essence of the fault lies in the want of that charity, which thinketh no ill. Had the heart been filled with this principle, no such bad thing as slander would have come out of it; but if the heart be not filled with this principle, and in its stead there be the operation of envy—or a desire to avenge yourselves of others, by getting the judgment of men to go against them—or a taste for the ludicrous, which, rather than be ungratified, will expose the peculiarities of the absent to the mirth of a company—or the idle and thoughtless levity of gossiping, which cannot be checked by any consideration of the mischief that may be done

by its indulgence;—I say, if any or all of these, take up that room in the heart, which should have been filled with charity, and sent forth the fruits of it, then the stream will just be as the fountain, and out of the treasure of the evil heart, there will flow that evil practice of censoriousness, on which the gospel of Christ pronounces its severe and decisive condemnation.

But though all evil-speaking be referable to the want of a good, or to the existence of an evil principle in the heart, yet there is one style of evil-speaking different from another; and you can easily conceive how a man addicted to one way of it, may hate, and despise, and have a mortal antipathy, to another way of it. In this case, it is not the thing itself in its essential deformity that he condemns; it is some of the disgusting accompaniments of the thing; and while these excite his condemnation, and he views the man in whom they are realized, as every way worthy of being reprobated, he may not be aware, all the while, that in himself there exists an equal, and perhaps, a much larger portion of that very principle, which he should be reprobated for. The forms of evil-speaking break out into manifold varieties. There is the soft insinuation. There is the resentful outcry. There is the manly and indignant disapproval. There is the invective of vulgar malignity. There is the poignancy of satirical remark. There is the giddiness of mere volatility, which trips so carelessly along, and spreads its entertaining levities over a gay and light-hearted party. These are all so many transgressions of one and the same duty; and you can easily conceive an enlightened Chris-

tian sitting in judgment over them all, and taking hold of the right principle upon which he would condemn them all; and which, if brought to bear with efficacy on the consciences of the different offenders, would not merely silence the passionate evil-speaker out of his outrageous exclamations, and restrain the malignant evil-speaker from his deliberate thrusts at the reputation of the absent; but would rebuke the humorous evil-speaker out of his fanciful and amusing sketches, and the gossiping evil-speaker out of his tiresome and never-ending narratives. Now you may further conceive, how a man who realizes upon his own character one of these varieties, might have a positive dislike to another of them; how the open and generous-hearted denouncer of what is wrong, may hate from his very soul the poison of a sly and secret insinuation; how he who delivers himself in the chastened and well-bred tone of a gentleman, may recoil from the violence of an unmannerly invective; how he who enjoys the ridiculous of character, may be hurt and offended at hearing of the criminal of character;—and thus each, with the thorn in his own eye, may advert with regret and disapprobation to the mote in his brother's eye.

Now, mark the two advantages which arise from every man bringing himself to a strict examination, that he may if possible find out the principle of that fault in his own mind, which he conceives to deform the doings and the character of another. His attention is carried away from the mere accompaniment of the fault to its actual and constituting essence. He pursues his search from the outward and accidental

varieties, to the one principle which spreads the leaven of iniquity over them all. By looking into his own heart, he is made acquainted with the movements of this principle. When forced to disapprove of others, his disapprobation is not a mere matter of taste, or of education, but the entire and well-founded disapprobation of principle. He sees where the radical mischief of the whole business lies. He sees that if the principle of doing no ill were established within the heart, it would cut up by the root all evil-speaking in all its shapes and in all its modifications. His own diligent keeping of his own heart upon this subject would bring the matter into his frequent contemplation, and enable him to perceive where its essence and its malignity lay, and give him an enlightened judgment of it in all its effects and workings upon others; and thus, by the very progress of struggling against it, and watching against it, and praying against it, and in the strength of divine grace prevailing against it, and at length succeeding in pulling the thorn out of his own eye, he would see clearly to cast out the mote out of his brother's eye.

But another mighty advantage of this self-examination is, that the more a man does examine, the more does he discover the infirmities of his own character. That very infirmity against which, in another, he might have protested with all the force of a vehement indignation, he might find lurking in his own bosom, though under the disguise of a different form. Such a discovery as this will temper his indignation. It will humble him into the meekness of wisdom. It will soften him into charity. It will infuse a candour and a gentleness into all his judg-

ments. The struggle he has had with himself to keep down the sin he sees in another, will train him to an indulgence he might never have felt, had he been altogether blind to the diseases of his own moral constitution. When he tries to reform a neighbour, the attempt will be marked by all the mildness of one who is deeply conscious of his own frailties, and fearful of the exposures which he himself may have to endure. And I leave it to your own experience of human nature to determine, whether he bids fairer for success who rebukes with the intolerant tone of a man who is unconscious of his own blemishes; or he who, with all the spirituality of an humble and exercised Christian, endeavours to restore him who is overtaken in a fault, with the spirit of meekness, "considering himself lest he also be tempted."

Now the fault of evil-speaking is only one out of the many. The lesson of the text might be farther illustrated by other cases and other examples. I might specify the various forms of worldliness, and wilfulness, and fraud, and falsehood, and profanity, and show how the man who realizes these sins in one form, might pass his condemnatory sentence on the man who realizes the very same sins in another form; and I might succeed in saying to the conviction of his conscience, even as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man;" and might press home upon him the mighty task of self-examination, and set him from that to the task of diligent reform, that he might be enabled to see the fault of his neighbour more clearly, and rebuke it more gently, and winningly, and considerately. But my time restrains me from expatiating; and however great my reluctance at being

withdrawn from the higher office of dealing with the hearts and the consciences of individuals, to any other office, which, however good in itself, bears a most minute and insignificant proportion to the former, yet I must not forget that I stand here as the advocate of a public Society ;—and I therefore propose to throw the remainder of my discourse into such a train of observation as may bear upon its designs and its enterprises.

II. I now proceed, then, to the more general kind of judgment which we are apt to pass on men of a different persuasion in matters of religion.—There is something in the very circumstance of its being a different religion from our own, which, prior to all our acquaintance with its details, is calculated to repel and to alarm us. It is not the religion in which we have been educated. It is not the religion which furnishes us with our associations of sacredness. Nay, it is a religion, which, if admitted into our creed, would tear asunder all these associations. It would break up all the repose of our established habits. It would darken the whole field of our accustomed contemplations. It would put to flight all those visions of the mind which stood linked with the favour of God, and the blissful prospects of eternity. It would unsettle, and disturb, and agitate; and this, not merely because it threw a doubtfulness over the question of our personal security, but because it shocked our dearest feelings of tenderness for that which we had been trained to love, and of veneration for that which we had been trained to look at in the aspect of awful and imposing solemnity.

Add to all this, the circumstance of its being a religion with the intolerance of which our fathers had to struggle unto the death; a religion which lighted up the fires of persecution in other days; a religion, which at one time put on a face of terror, and bathed its hands in the blood of cruel martyrdom; a religion, by resistance to which, the men of a departed generation are embalmed in the memory of the present, among the worthies of our established faith. We have only to contemplate the influence of these things, when handed down by tradition, and written in the most popular histories of the land, and told round the evening fire to the children of every cottage family, who listen, in breathless wonderment, to the tale of midnight alarm, and kindle at the battle-cry lifted by the patriots of a former age, when they made their noble stand for the outraged rights of conscience and of liberty; we have only to think of these things, and we shall cease our amazement, that such a religion, even though its faults and its merits be equally unknown, should light up a passionate aversion in many a bosom, and have a recoiling sense of horror, and sacrilege, and blasphemy associated with its very name.

Now Popery is just such a religion; and I appeal to many present, if, though ignorant of almost all its doctrines and all its distinctions, there does not spring up a quickly felt antipathy in their bosoms even at the very mention of Popery. There can be no doubt, that for one or two generations, this feeling has been rapidly on the decline. But it still lurks, and operates, and spreads a very wide and sensible infusion over the great mass of our Scottish

population. There is now a dormancy about it, and it does not break out into those rude and tumultuary surges, which at one time filled our streets with violence, and sent a ferment of jealousy and alarm over the whole face of our country. But we still meet with the traces of its existence. We feel it in our own bosoms when we hear of any of the ceremonials of Popery: and I just ask you to think of those peculiar sensations which rise within you at the mention of the holy water, or the consecrated wafer, or the extreme unction of the Catholic ritual. There is still a sensation of repugnance, though it be dim, and in its painfulness it be rapidly departing away from us; and I think that, even at this hour, should a Popish Chapel send up its lofty minarets, and spread a rich and expanded magnificence before the public eye, though many look with unmingled delight on the grandeur of the ascending pile, yet there may still be detected a visible expression of jealousy and offence in the side-long glance, and the inward and half-suppressed murmuring of the occasional passenger.

Now, is it not conceivable that such a traditional repugnance to Popery may exist in the very same mind, with a total ignorance of what those things are for which it merits our repugnance? May there not be a kind of sensitive recoil in the heart against this religion, while the understanding is entirely blind to those alone features which justify our dislike to it? May there not be all the violence of an antipathy within us at Popery, and there be at the same time within us all the faults and all the errors of Popery? May not the thorn be in our own eye, while the mote

in our neighbour's eye is calling forth all the severity of our indignation? While we are sitting in the chair of judgment, and dealing forth from the eminence of a superior discernment, our invectives against what we think to be sacrilegious in the creed and practice of others, may it not be possible to detect in ourselves the same perversion of principle, the same idolatrous resistance to truth and righteousness; and surely, it well becomes us in this case, while we are so ready to precipitate our invectives upon the head of bystanders, to pass an humbling examination upon ourselves, that we may come to a more enlightened estimate of that which is the object of our condemnation; and that, when we condemn, we may do it with wisdom, and with the meekness of wisdom.

Let us therefore take a nearer look of Popery, and try to find out how much of Popery there is in the religion of Protestants.

But, let it be premised, that many of the disciples of this religion disclaim much of what we impute to them; that the Popery of a former age may not be a fair specimen of the Popery of the present; that, in point of fact, many of its professors have evinced all the spirit of devout and enlightened Christians; that in many districts of Popery, the Bible is in full and active circulation; and that thus, while the name and externals are retained, and waken up all our traditional repugnance against it, there may be among thousands and tens of thousands of its nominal adherents, all the soul, and substance, and principle, and piety of a reformed faith. When I therefore enumerate the errors of Popery, I do not assert the extent to which they exist. I merely say that such errors

are imputed to them; and instead of launching forth into severities against those who are thus charged, all I propose is, to direct you to the far more profitable and Christian employment of shaming ourselves out of these very errors, that we may know how to judge of others, and that we may do it with the tenderness of charity.

First, then, it is said of Papists, that they ascribe an infallibility to the Pope, so that if he were to say one thing and the Bible another, his authority would carry it over the authority of God. And, think you, my brethren, that there is no such Popery among you? Is there no taking of your religion upon trust from another, when you should draw it fresh and unsullied from the fountain-head of inspiration? You all have, or you ought to have, Bibles; and how often is it repeated there, "hearken diligently unto me?" Now, do you obey this requirement, by making the reading of your Bibles a distinct and earnest exercise? Do you ever dare to bring your favourite minister to the tribunal of the word, or would you tremble at the presumption of such an attempt, so that the hearing of the word carries a greater authority over your mind than the reading of the word? Now this want of daring, this trembling at the very idea of a dissent from your minister, this indolent acquiescence in his doctrine, is just calling another man master; it is putting the authority of man over the authority of God; it is throwing yourself into a prostrate attitude at the footstool of human infallibility; it is not just kissing the toe of reverence, but it is the profounder degradation of the mind and of all its faculties; and without the name of Popery—that

name which lights up so ready an antipathy in your bosoms, your soul may be infected with the substantial poison, and your conscience be weighed down by the oppressive shackles, of Popery. And all this, in the noonday effulgence of a Protestant country, where the Bible, in your mother tongue, circulates among all your families—where it may be met with in almost every shelf, and is ever soliciting you to look to the wisdom that is inscribed upon its pages. O! how tenderly should we deal with the prejudices of a rude and uneducated people, who have no Bibles, and no art of reading among them, to unlock its treasures, when we think that, even in this our land, the voice of human authority carries so mighty an influence along with it, and veneration for the word of God is darkened and polluted by a blind veneration for its interpreters.

We tremble to read of the fulminations that have issued in other days from a conclave of cardinals.—Have we no conclaves, and no fulminations, and no orders of inquisition, in our own country? Is there no professing brotherhood, or no professing sisterhood, to deal their censorious invectives around them, upon the members of an excommunicated world? There is such a thing as a religious public. There is a "little flock," on the one hand, and a "world lying in wickedness," on the other. But have a care, ye who think yourselves of the favoured few, how you never transgress the mildness, and charity, and unostentatious virtues of the gospel; lest you hold out a distorted picture of Christianity in your neighbourhood, and impose that as religion on the fancy of the credulous, which stands at as wide a distance

from the religion of the New Testament, as do the services of an exploded superstition, or the mummeries of an antiquated ritual.

But, again, it is said of Papists, that they hold the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation. Now, a doctrine may be monstrous on two grounds. It may be monstrous on the ground of its absurdity, or it may be monstrous on the ground of its impiety. It must have a most practically mischievous effect on the conscience, should a communicant sit down at the table of the Lord; and think that the act of appointed remembrance is equivalent to a real sacrifice, and a real expiation; and leave the performance with a mind unburdened of all its past guilt, and resolved to incur fresh guilt to be wiped away by a fresh expiation. But in the sacraments of our own country, is there no crucifying of the Lord afresh? Is there none of that which gives the doctrine of transubstantiation all its malignant influence on the hearts and lives of its proselytes? Is there no mysterious virtue annexed to the elements of this ordinance? Instead of being repaired to for the purpose of recruiting our languid affections to the Saviour, and strengthening our faith, and arming us with a firmer resolution, and more vigorous purpose of obedience, does the conscience of no communicant solace itself by the mere performance of the outward act, and suffer him to go back with a more reposing security to the follies, and vices, and indulgences of the world? Then, my brethren, his erroneous view of the sacrament may not be clothed in a term so appalling to the hearts and the feelings of Protestants as transubstantiation, but to it belongs all the immoral-

ity of transubstantiation; and the thorn must be pulled out of his eye, ere he can see clearly to cast the mote out of his brother's eye.

But, thirdly, it is said, that Papists worship saints, and fall down to graven images. This is very, very bad. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But let us take ourselves to task upon this charge also. Have we no consecrated names in the annals of reformation—no worthies who hold too commanding a place in the remembrance and affection of Protestants? Are there no departed theologians, whose works hold too domineering an ascendency over the faith and practice of Christians? Are there no laborious compilations of other days, which, instead of interpreting the Bible, have given its truths a shape, and a form, and an arrangement, that confer upon them another impression, and impart to them another influence, from the pure and original record? We may not bend the knee in any sensible chamber of imagery, at the remembrance of favourite saints. But do we not bend the understanding before the volumes of favourite authors, and do an homage to those representations of the minds of the men of other days, which should be exclusively given to the representation of the mind of the Spirit, as put down in the book of the Spirit's revelation? It is right that each of us should give the contribution of his own talents, and his own learning, to this most interesting cause; but let the great drift of our argument be to prop the authority of the Bible, and to turn the eye of earnestness upon its pages; for if any work, instead of exalting the Bible, shall be made, by the

misjudging reverence of others, to stand in its place, then we introduce a false worship into the heart of a reformed country, and lay prostrate the conscience of men, under the yoke of a spurious authority.

But, fourthly and lastly—for time does not permit such an enumeration, as would exhaust all the leading peculiarities ascribed to this faith—it is stated, that by the form of a confession, in the last days of a sinner's life, and the ministration of extreme unction upon his deathbed, he may be sent securely to another world, with all the unrepented profligacy, and fraud, and wickedness of this world upon his forehead; that this is looked forward to, and counted upon by every Catholic—and sets him loose from all those anticipations which work upon the terror of other men—and throws open to him an unbridled career, through the whole of which, he may wanton in all the varieties of criminal indulgence—and at length when death knocks at his door, if he just allow him time to send for his minister, and to hurry along with him, through the steps of an adjusted ceremonial, the man's passage through that dark vale, which carries him out of the world, is strewed with the promises of delusion—that every painful remembrance of the past is stifled amid the splendours and the juggleries of an imposing ritual: and in place of conscience rising upon him, and charging him with the guilty track of disobedience he has run, and forcing him to flee, amid the agitations of his restless bed, to the blood of the great Atonement, and alarming him into an earnest cry for the clean heart and the right spirit, knowing that unless he be born again unto repentance, he shall perish—why, my brethren, instead of

these salutary exercises, we are told, that a fictitious hope is made to pour its treacherous sunshine into the bosom of a deceived Catholic—that, when standing on the verge of eternity, he can cast a fearless eye over its dark and untravelled vastness,—and that, for the terror of its coming wrath, his guilty and unrenewed soul is filled with all the radiance and all the elevation of its anticipated glories.

O! my brethren, it is piteous to think of such a preparation, but it is just such a preparation as meets the sad experience of us all. The man, whose every affection has clung to the world, till the last hour of his possibility to enjoy it; who never put forth an effort or a prayer to be delivered from the power of sin, till every faculty of its pleasures had expired; who, through the varied progress of his tastes and his desires, from amusement to dissipation, and from dissipation to business, had always a something in all the successive stages of his career, to take up his heart to the exclusion of him who formed it;—why, such a man, who never thought of pressing the lessons of the minister upon his conscience, while life was vigorous, and the full swing of its delights and occupations could be indulged in,—do we never find, even in the bosom of this reformed country, that while his body retains all its health, his spirit retains all its hardihood; and not till the arrival of that week, or that month, or that year, when the last messenger begins to alarm him, does he think of sending to the man of God, an humble supplicant for his attendant prayers. Ah! my brethren, do you not think, amid the tones, and the sympathies, and the tears, which an affectionate pastor pours out in

the fervency of his soul, and mingles with all his petitions, and all his addresses to the dying man, that no flattering unction ever steals upon him, to lull his conscience, and smooth the agony of his departure? Then, my brethren, you mistake it, you sadly mistake it; and even here, where I lift my voice among a crowd of men, in the prime and unbroken vigour of their days,—if even the youngest and likeliest of you all, shall, trusting to some future repentance, cherish the purpose of sin another hour, and not resolve at this critical and important Now, to break it all off, by an act of firm abandonment, then be your abhorrence at Popery what it may, you are exemplifying the worst of its errors, and wrapping yourselves up in the cruelest and most inveterate of its delusions.

I have left myself very little time for the application of all this to the particular objects of our Society. —First, Let it correct the very gross and vulgar tendency we all have to think, that the kingdom of God cometh with observation. That kingdom has its seat within us, and consists in the reign of principle over the hidden and invisible mind. The mere deposition of the Pope from that throne where he sits surrounded with the splendour of temporalities, —the mere ascendency of Protestant princes, over the counsels and politics of the world,—the mere exclusion of Catholic subjects from our administrations and our Parliaments,—these things are all very observable, but they may all happen, without one inch of progress being made towards the establishment of that kingdom, which cometh not with observation. Why, my brethren, the supposition

may be a very odd one, nor do I say that it is at all likely to be realized,—but for the sake of illustration, I will come forward with it. Conceive that the Spirit of God, accompanying the circulation of the word of God, were to introduce all its truths and all its lessons into the heart of every individual of the Catholic priesthood; and that the Pope himself, instead of being brought down in person from the secular eminence he occupies, were brought down in spirit, with all his lofty imaginations, to the captivity of the obedience of Christ,—then I am not prepared to assert, that under the influence of this great Christian episcopacy, a mighty advancement may not be made in building up the kingdom of God, and in throwing down the kingdom of Satan, throughout all the territories of Catholic Christendom. And yet, with all this, the name of Catholic may be retained,—the external and visible marks of distinction, may be as prominent as ever,—and with all those insignia about them, which keep up our passionate antipathy to this denomination, there might not be a single ingredient in the spirit of its members, to merit our rational antipathy. I beg you will just take all this as an attempt at the illustration of what I count a very important principle;—and, to make the illustration more complete, let me take up the case of a Protestant country, and put the supposition, that, with the name of a pure and spiritual religion, the majority of its inhabitants are utter strangers to its power; that an indifference to the matters of faith and of eternity, works all the effect of a deep and fatal infidelity on their consciences; that the world engrosses every heart, and the king-

dom which is not of this world, is virtually disowned and held in derision among the various classes and characters of society; that the spirit of the New Testament is banished from our Parliaments, and banished from our Universities, and banished from the great bulk of our ecclesiastical establishments, and it is only to be met with among a few inconsiderable men, who are scouted by the general voice as the fanatics and visionaries of the day;—then, my brethren, I am not to be charmed out of truth, and of principle, by the mockery of a name. Call such a country reformed, as you may, it is full of the strong holds of antichrist, from one end to the other of it; and there must be a revolution of sentiment there, as well as in the darkest regions of Popery, ere the "enemies of the Son of God be consumed by the breath of his mouth," or "Babylon the great be fallen."

Now, secondly, mark the influence of such a train of sentiment, on the spirit of those who are employed in spreading the light of reformation among a Catholic people. It will purify their aim, and give it a judicious direction, and chase away from their proceedings that offensive tone of arrogance which is calculated to irritate, and to beget a more determined obstinacy of prejudice than ever. Their great aim, to express it in one word, is to plant in the hearts of all men of all countries, the religion of the Bible. Their great direction will be toward the establishment of right principle; and in the prosecution of it, they will carefully avoid multiplying the points of irritation, by giving vent to their traditional repugnance against the less material forms of

Popery. And the meek consciousness of that woful departure from vital Christianity, which has taken place even in the reformed countries of Christendom, will devest them of that repulsive superiority which, I fear, has gone far to defeat the success of many an attempt, upon many an enemy of the truth as it is in Jesus. "The whole amount of our message is to furnish you with the Bible, and to furnish you with the art of reading it. We think the lessons of this book well fitted to chase away the manifold errors, which rankle in the bosom of our own country. You are the subjects of error as well as we; and we trust that you will find them useful, in enlightening the prejudices, and in aiding the frailties to which, as the children of one common humanity, we are all liable. Amongst us, there is a mighty deference to the authority of man: if this exist among you, here is a book which tells us to call no man master, and delivers us from the fallibility of human opinions. Amongst us, there is a delusive confidence in the forms of godliness, with little of its power: here is a book, which tells us that holiness of life is the great end of all our ceremonies, and of all our sacraments. Amongst us there is a host of theologians, each wielding his separate authority over the creed and the conscience of his countrymen, and you, Catholics, have justly reproached us with our manifold and never-ending varieties; but here is a book, the influence of which is throwing all these differences into the back ground, and bringing forward those great and substantial points of agreement, which lead us to recognize the man of another creed to be essentially a Christian,—and we want to widen this circle

of fellowship, that we may be permitted to live in the exercise of one faith, and of one charity along with you. Amongst us the great bulk of men pass through life forgetful of eternity, and think, that by the sighs and the ministrations of their last days, they will earn all the blessedness of its ever-during rewards. But here is a book which tells us that we should seek first the kingdom of God; and will not let us off with any other repentance than repentance now; and tells us, what we trust, will light with greater energy on your consciences than it has ever done upon ours, that we should haste and make no delay to keep the commandments." O! my brethren, let us not despair that such arguments, urged by the mild charity which adorns the Bible, and followed up by its circulation, will at length tell on the firmest defences that bigotry ever raised around the conscience and the principles of men—and that, out of those jarring elements which threaten our empire with a wild war of turbulence and disorder, we shall by the blessing of God be enabled to cement all its members into one great and harmonious family.

I conclude with saying, that, mainly and substantially speaking, I conceive this to be the very spirit of the attempt that is now making by the Society I am now pleading for. It is not an offensive declaration of war against Popery. It is true that it may be looked upon virtually as a measure of hostility against the errors of Catholics, but no more than it is a measure of hostility against the errors of Protestants. The light of truth is fitted to chase away all error, and there is something in that Bible which

the agents of our Society are now teaching so assiduously, that it is not more humbling and more severe on the general spirit of Ireland, than it is on the general spirit of our own country. It is true, that some of the Catholics set their face against the establishment of our Schools, but this resistance to education is not peculiar to them. It is to be met with in England. It is to be met with in our own boasted and beloved Scotland. It is to be met with even among the enlightened classes of British Society—and shall we speak of it as if it fastened a peculiar stigma on that Country, which we have left to languish in depression and ignorance for so many generations? But, this resistance on the part of Catholics is far from general. In one district the teachers of our Schools are chiefly Roman Catholics; many of the School Houses are Catholic Chapels; and the great majority of the Scholars are children of Catholic parents, who have appeared not a little elated that their children have proved more expert in their scriptural quotations than their neighbours.—Call you not this an auspicious commencement? Is there no loosening of prejudice here? Do you not perceive that the firmest system of bigotry, ever erected over the minds of a prostrate population, must give way before the continued operation of such an expedient as this? There is no one device of human policy that has done so much for Ireland in a whole century, as is now doing by the progress of education, and the freer circulation of the gospel of light through the dark mass and interior of their peasantry. Let me crave the assistance of the public in this place to one of the most powerful instruments that has yet

been set agoing for helping forward this animating cause. It is an instrument ready made to your hand. The Hibernian Society have already established 347 Schools in our Sister Country, a number equal to one third of the parishes in Scotland; and they are dealing out education, a pure scriptural education, to 27,700 Irish children. It will be a disgrace to us if we do not signalize ourselves in such a business as this. We talk of the Irish as a wild and uncivilized people. It will be the indication of a very gross and uncivilized public at home, if we restrict our interchange with the men of the opposite shore, to the one interchange of merchandise. Let the rudeness of the Irish be what it may, sure I am, that there is much in their constitutional character to encourage us in this enterprise. They have many good points and engaging properties about them. I speak not of that peculiar style of genius and of eloquence, which gives such fascination to the poets, the authors, the orators of Ireland. I speak of the great mass, and I do think that I perceive a something in the natural character of Ireland, which draws me more attractively to the love of its people, than any other picture of national manners ever has inspired. Even amid the wildest extravagance of that humour which sits so visibly and so universally on the countenance of the Irish population, I can see a heart and a social sympathy along with it. Amid all the wayward and ungovernable flights of that rare pleasantry which belongs to them, there is a something by which the bosom of an Irishman can be seriously and permanently affected, and which I think in judicious hands is convertible into the finest

results on the ultimate character of that people. It strikes me, that, of all the men on the face of the earth, they would be the worst fitted to withstand the expression of honest, frank, liberal, and persevering kindness;—that if they saw there was no artful policy in the attentions by which you plied them, but that an upright and firmly sustained benevolence lay at the bottom of all your exertions for the best interest of their families; could they attain the conviction, that, amid all the contempt and all the resistance you experienced from their hands, there still existed in your bosoms an unquelled and an undissembled love for them and for their children;—could they see the working of this principle devested of every treacherous and suspicious symptom, and unwearied amid every discouragement in prosecuting the task of their substantial amelioration,—Why, my brethren, let all this come to be seen, and in a few years I trust our devoted missionaries will bring it before them broad and undeniable as the light of day, and those hearts that are now shut against you in sullenness and disdain will be subdued into tenderness; the strong emotions of gratitude and nature will at length find their way through all the barriers of prejudice; and a people whom no penalties could turn, whom no terror of military violence could overcome, who kept on a scowling front of hostility that was not to be softened, while war spread its desolating cruelties over their unhappy land,—this very people will do homage to the omnipotence of charity, and when the mighty armour of Christian kindness is brought to bear upon them, it will be found to be irresistible.

APPENDIX.

Extracts from the Eleventh Annual Report of the Hibernian Society, for Establishing Schools, and circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland. London, 1817.

THE Committee are persuaded, that among the numerous Institutions which the Divine power and goodness have raised up in this kingdom, the Hibernian Society, if duly considered, will stand very high in the scale of moral and religious importance; and they are happy to add, that the present Report will present to its worthy supporters, continued and additional instances of the practicability of its designs, and the success of its operations.

"In the good work of establishing Schools for the education of the children of the poor, in Ireland, the Committee had proceeded so far, at the time of holding the last General Meeting, as to report, that the number of Schools exceeded three hundred; and that the children and adults educated therein were upwards of nineteen thousand. They have now the pleasure to state, that, by the annual return which was made up to Christmas last, the number of Schools is 347; and the children and adults educated therein, are 27,776.

"Such is the endearing and interesting spectacle which the present state of the labours of the Society presents to its benevolent supporters. Every Parent, every Christian, and every Briton must rejoice in the accomplishment of so much good to Ireland, where it was so peculiarly needed; and it is of such a nature, and is in such a course of extension and increase, as to afford the most reasonable expectations of enlarged and permanent benefits to that part of the United Kingdom.

"The Committee are happy to state, that the regulations for the conduct of the Schools are in full operation, and that the Inspectors are active and circumspect. The progress of the children in learning to read, and in committing the Scriptures to memory, and the interest that even Catholic parents feel in having their little ones appear with credit at the inspections, are truly gratifying. The attention of the Masters, in general, to the import of the sacred word, is pleasingly on the increase: and among such as have had their own understandings enlightened and informed, there exists a spirit of emulation to have their pupils excel in giving suitable answers to questions relating to the meaning of the passages which they repeat."

"These instances evidently show the immediate and direct influence which the Schools produce on the minds of the parents of the children who are educated therein; and that an emanation of Scripture light, and a portion of religious interest of the most important and useful kind, are introduced into the humble cottages of the poor. These now have some 'light in their dwellings,' in the midst of surrounding darkness and superstition; which, however, begins to be penetrated with the beams of Divine truth, and to be impressed with that word which is "quick and powerful, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." On this interesting subject, a most valuable correspondent of the Committee thus writes:—

"From the many applications I receive from individuals from different parts of the country for Bibles and Testaments, there is strong evidence to the spreading of religious inquiry among the mass of the people. Many of them come from places remote from any of the Schools; but I always find that anxiety for the Scriptures has been excited by converse with some who have been pupils therein, who have lived in the neighbourhood of the Schools, or have been in some other ways immediately or remotely connected with them.

"Could the moral and religious improvement of the human mind be as easily discovered as the agricultural improvement of a country, those numerous districts where the Schools have been for any time established, would be found to exhibit a striking contrast to those wherein they have not yet taken place. While these would be seen in all the nakedness of sterility, or fruitful only in the production of noxious weeds; in the other it would appear that in a great degree the fallow ground has been broken up, the good seed sown and in a state of vegetation, waiting for the early and latter rain; in many, the appearance of a healthful crop would gladden the eye, and in some, the fields would appear already white unto the harvest.

"The great increase in the number of the Schools; the amazing anxiety for the Scriptures which they have been the means of exciting in every district; the increasing demand for evening Schools for the instruction of the adult population,—all pressingly call for such a supply of Bibles and Testaments as I am unable to meet. Were the wonders doing in this country by the instrumentality of the Hibernian Society fully known in England, and their importance rightly appreciated, no Society would be found deserving of greater support."

"The Committee continue to give the greatest encouragement to the instruction of adults in the vicinity of the Schools; and they receive the most pleasing accounts of the efficacy of the word of God in the enlight-

ening of the minds of those who probably would never have had an opportunity of reading the Scriptures, or of hearing them read, had it not been for the free Schools which this Society has established, and for the numerous copies of the Divine word which it has industriously circulated. Indeed, the Visiters to the Schools perceive and acknowledge, that, *were it not for the labours of this Institution it would be impossible for the Bible Societies to get the Scriptures into the hands of the Catholics*, the great mass of the population of Ireland.

"The formation of Irish classes in the Schools which are appropriate thereto, continues to be sedulously promoted. An additional allowance has been granted to the Masters for their Irish Testament classes; and this has powerfully operated to increase the demand for Irish Testaments, both in the day Schools, and also in those which are held in the evening, for teaching the adults.

"The Committee could adduce additional instances of approbation and support from some of the Catholic Clergy, both of the Society's Schools, and of its exertions to circulate the Scriptures; but the limits of this Report will not permit an enlargement on this pleasing and interesting subject. If, however, the views and objects of this Institution have only commended themselves as yet to a small part of the Catholic body, the Committee are happy to state that, in the Protestant community, the high importance of the Hibernian Society increasingly arrests public attention; that the demands for Schools in almost every district are more numerous than can be attended to; and that in every place respectable individuals come forward, unsolicited, to carry into execution the benevolent designs of the Society. And here it is very appropriate and grateful to observe, that to the Clergy of the Established Church who have afforded their patronage to the Schools, and have condescended to act as Visiters, the Society are under very great obligations; and particularly to an excellent Dignitary of that Church, who has always entered into the views of the Society with a liberal mind, has furthered them with continued assiduity, and has recently from the pulpit pleaded the cause of the Institution, and thereby added to its celebrity and support. This last service called for the official thanks of the Committee. They were transmitted by the Treasurer, and the answer which has been received from this estimable personage is so characteristic of his piety and philanthropy, and so highly honourable to the Hibernian Society, that it would be unsuitable and injurious to withhold the following extract:—

"I have received your very kind letter, communicating the thanks of the Committee of the Hibernian Society of London, to me, for the sermon

I preached in Sligo Church on their behalf; and for other services which the Committee are pleased kindly to notice, as rendered by me to the Schools under their patronage. Whatever little I have been enabled to do, I have felt that therein I have been doing the best service I could to this quarter of my *poor benighted* country. And I thank God, that I see the exertions which the Society has made already (and they have been great) so largely owned of Him. I am persuaded, that nothing is calculated so much, under the Divine blessing, to dispel the gross darkness that has covered this land, for so many ages, as such a system of general Scriptural education, as that adopted by your Society. And I have to acknowledge that the establishment of the Society's Schools in the vicinity of my ministerial duties, has proved the happy instrument of a great enlargement of utterance and usefulness to me; and never more did I experience this enlargement, than on the late occasion of my visiting Sligo, to advocate the cause of the Society. If I have done this with any degree of success, I desire to thank, and give glory to God. Surely you well deserve the cordial co-operation of the Irish public; and you call forth from Irish Christians, thanksgivings to God, for the grace bestowed upon you."

It has been noticed that the number of children and adults taught in the Society's Schools has increased, in the course of the last year, from 19,000 to 27,000, and that requisitions for additional Schools are far more numerous than can be complied with. It will also be remembered, that at the time of holding the last Annual Meeting, the expenditure of the Society had exceeded its income upwards of 600*l*. In this conflict of an enlarged establishment and a deficient revenue, of encouraging prospects and limited means, the Committee have endeavoured to increase the funds of the Society, and to lessen the expenses of its future operations. To obtain the first-mentioned benefit, they have transmitted a circular letter to Ministers generally, in town and country, describing the state of the Institution, as to its importance, its usefulness, and its necessities; urging them to interest themselves, in procuring Subscriptions and Donations: and particularly and earnestly requesting them to incorporate it amongst those other excellent Societies, for the assistance of which Auxiliary Institutions have in so many places been established. These dispense their tributary streams with fertilizing and invigorating energies; and if, in their course, they were permitted to visit and enrich the Hibernian Society, Ireland would greatly benefit by the diffusion, and would ardently bless her pious and liberal benefactors.—With regard to lessening the expense of future operations, the Committee have

endeavoured to connect the formation of *new* Schools, with an Annual Subscription; and, in this way, it is to be hoped, that many of the resident noblemen and gentlemen in Ireland, will assist in carrying into effect the designs, and in relieving the funds, of the Hibernian Society.

It has been truly gratifying to the Committee, to state the considerable increase of the Society's Schools, and the evident utility and success of its operations; but it is with regret that they view the inadequacy of the funds to defray the necessary expenses of the Institution; and with anxiety that they contrast the openings of Providence which present themselves, for exertions of a very extensive nature—in the highest degree important, and promising the most happy results,—with the alarming deficiency of pecuniary means for following those providential leadings, with the energies and the hopes which they are so well calculated to inspire.

With respect to the progress which has already been made in fulfilling the purposes for which the Society was formed, it may be observed,—that its advances in extension of operations, and its success by its means and instruments, have proved in the highest degree pleasing and satisfactory. It was not till about the year 1809, that Schools were established in Ireland, under the patronage of the Hibernian Society; from which period to the present time, these establishments have so increased as to include upwards of 27,000 pupils. And when it is considered that the Schools have been formed, and the children collected therein, for the purpose of imparting the benefits of education to the lower classes of the people, who had neither the means nor the hopes of these benefits from any other quarter; and also of diffusing the blessings of pure Scriptural instruction among those to whom the policy and the power of their superiors forbid the introduction of these blessings; surely it must be acknowledged, that the designs and operations of the Society have been appropriate and efficient, for the removal of the greatest of evils, and for the production of the most essential and important good. In fact, the gradually increasing operations of the Society have greatly exceeded its progressive means of support; its designs have been truly laudable and excellent, its means and instruments well adapted to execute them, and the sphere of its labours admirably calculated to gratify British benevolence, and to reward Christian zeal. Under all these circumstances, it is a matter of surprise and regret, that the income of this Institution, arising from annual subscriptions, does not amount to 500*l.*; whilst its annual expenditure is upwards of 4,000*l.*!! The deficiency has, in part, been supplied by Donations and Collections, and also by assistance received

from Auxiliary Societies; but the arrears at length amount to a sum (1,605*l.*) which must have become burdensome to the Treasurer, embarrassing to the Committee, and prejudicial to the interest of the Society.

To relieve it of this debt, is the anxious wish of its Committee, and must be the earnest desire of its Members. And when it is considered, as having arisen out of the actual prosperity of the cause, which the Society was established to promote, and from the enlarged and successful exertions which it has been enabled to prosecute, the Committee are persuaded that every Member of the Institution will feel it to be his duty and his pleasure, to unite with them, in immediate and earnest efforts, to replenish and increase its funds, in order that the Society may be relieved from the pressure of present obligations, and be capacitated to enter on a course of additional labours, and of extensive and hopeful exertions.

That the operations of this Society should be stationary, whilst the most fair and promising prospects open for their extension; that the benefits of education which it has conferred, and the blessings of Scriptural instruction, which it has imparted, should be circumscribed comparatively to a few, while hundreds of thousands are perishing for lack of knowledge, is a state of things, which must wound the feelings, and disappoint the hopes, of the supporters of the Institution.

That a work so truly important, that objects so highly benevolent, and that efforts so eminently successful, will be impeded or paralyzed for want of pecuniary support, the Committee cannot believe. For the appeal to Christian principles, feelings, and generosity, is made, in the present instance, to the religious public in Great Britain; whose noble liberality supports efforts of compassion and mercy, amongst the ignorant and the miserable, in the most distant parts of the world. And this liberality will surely not be withheld from the Hibernian Society, whose labours are directed to remove the afflicting spectacle of ignorance, superstition, immorality, and mental degradation, which the lower classes of the community in Ireland exhibit; to place our "brethren according to the flesh," our fellow subjects, on the same high ground of moral and national advantage on which we stand, and thus to promote their best interest, their highest happiness, and their eternal salvation.

THE END.